


Sister Ridgout's ✧  
SACRIFICE  
AND OTHER STORIES

*MRS. C. F. WILDER.*







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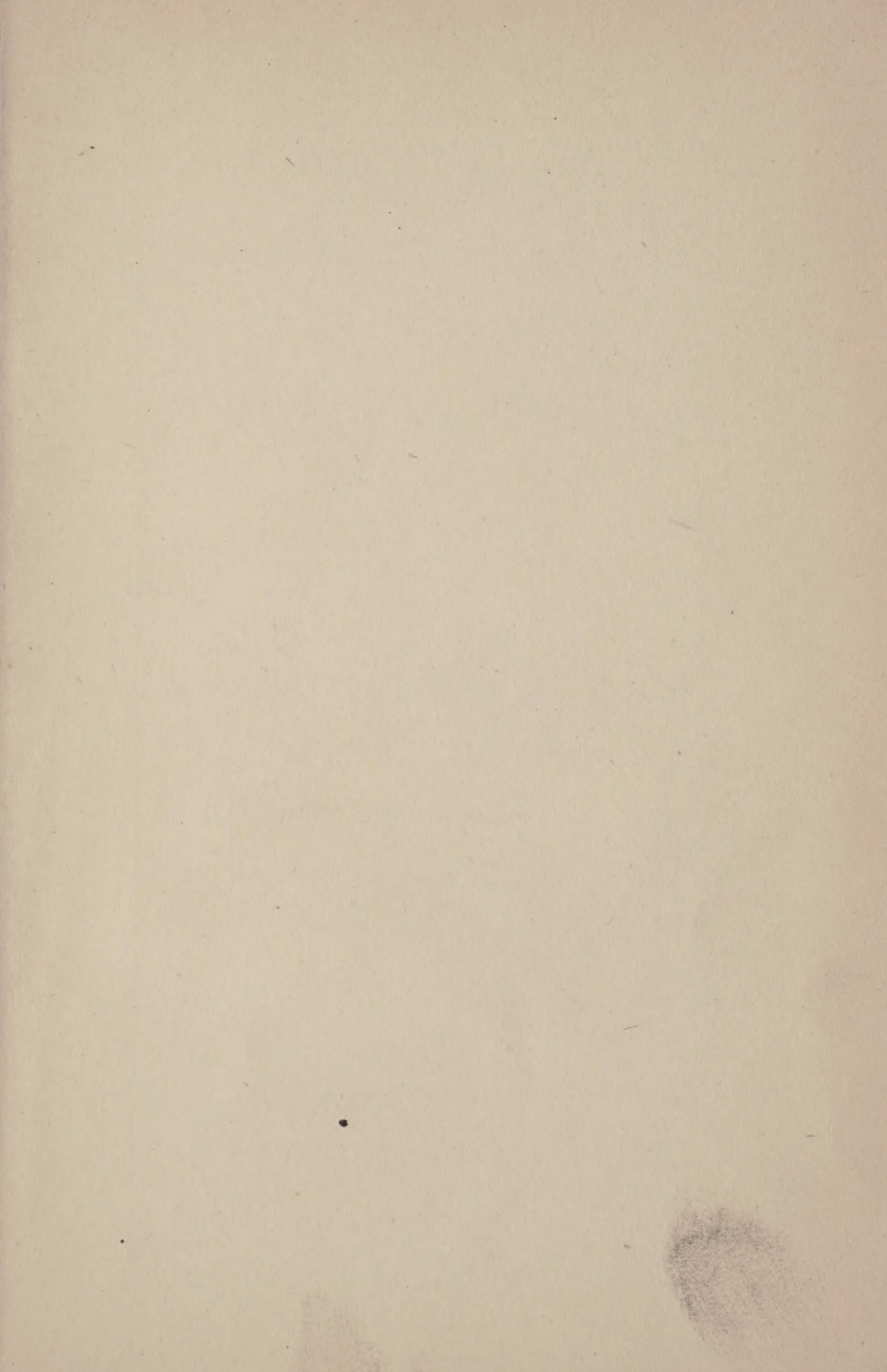


















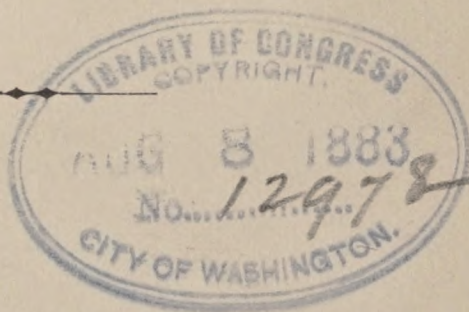
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# SISTER RIDNOUR'S SACRIFICE,

With . Other . Sketches.

BY

35-  
MRS. C. F. WILDER.  
Charlotte Frances



CINCINNATI:  
WALDEN AND STOWE.  
NEW YORK:  
PHILLIPS AND HUNT.  
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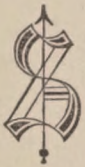






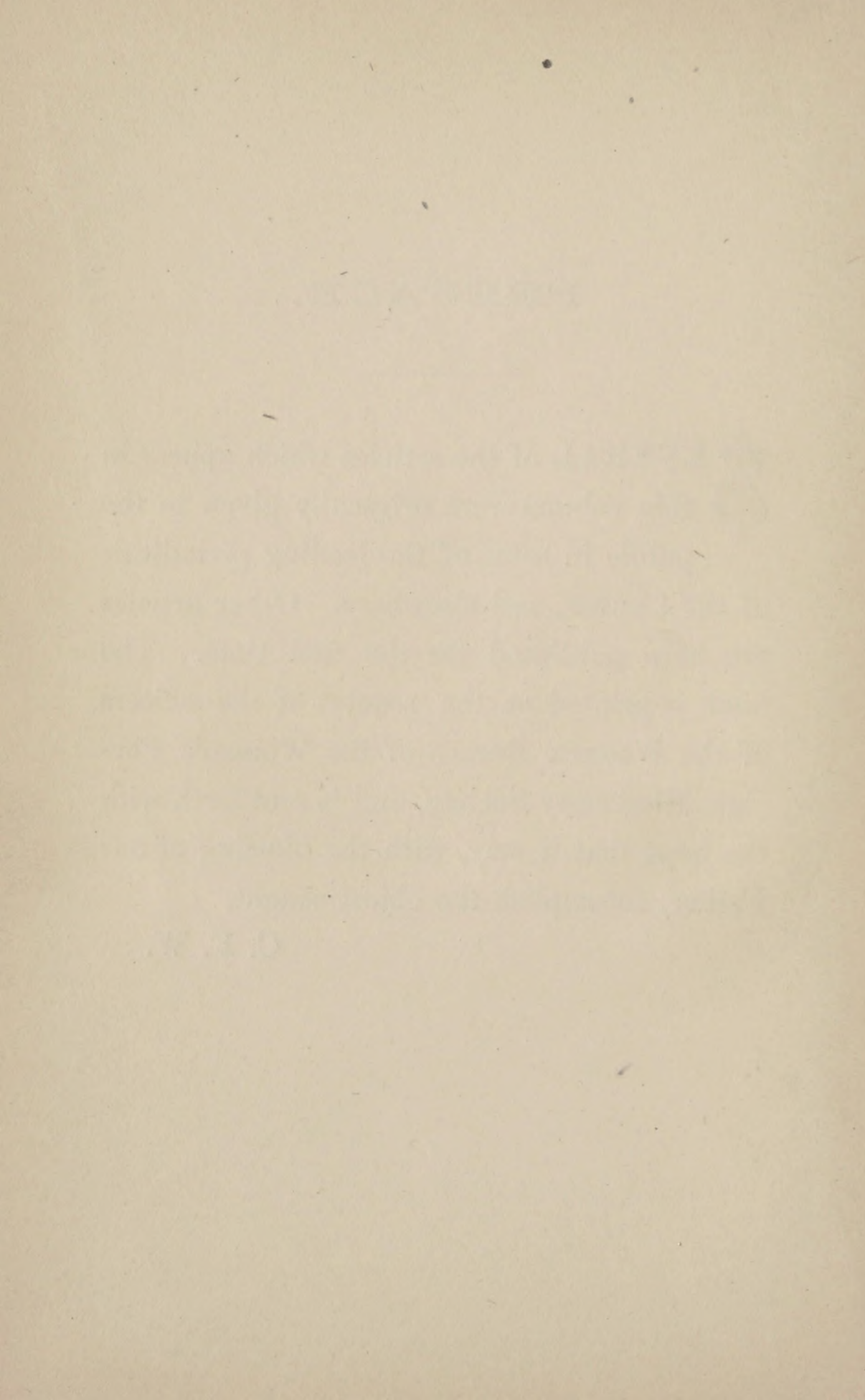
## PREFACE.

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 SEVERAL of the articles which appear in this volume were originally given to the public in some of the leading periodicals of the Church, and elsewhere. Other articles are here published for the first time. The book is printed at the request of the officers of the Western Branch of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and is sent forth with the hope that it may, with the blessing of our Father, accomplish the object sought.

C. F. W.







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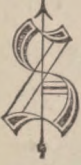




## I.

### Sister Ridnour's Sacrifice.

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ISTER RIDNOUR was never very much interested in the cause of missions. For many years after uniting with the Church, whenever it was announced that on a certain Sabbath the annual missionary sermon would be preached, a slight headache or a cloudy day would keep her at home. Her husband gave liberally to the cause, and if she thought any thing at all on the subject, that fact eased her conscience and threw responsibility from her shoulders. It must be confessed that there were times, if her attention was called to the matter, when her conscience gave her a thrust before she could turn her mind to some other subject, and at such times she would half promise herself to support some missionary in the field for a time, or, at least, educate an orphan for the work in heathen lands.

One day she took up a paper, and a notice of a missionary meeting, held in a church where for



many years she had worshiped in her youth, attracted her attention. She probably would not have read the report if it had not been for the associations connected with the Church. But she read the report, addresses, sermons, essays, and all. In one address, which was unusually interesting and pointed, there were five facts which clung to her mind, repeating themselves even against her will, until to get rid of them she resolved to act upon them. The five points were something as follows :

1. It is not a question of how much we *can* do, but how much we will.

2. What is most needed ; prayer, study of the Bible to find for ourselves what the divine requirement is, and study of the field.

3. It costs less to bring an unsaved soul to Christ in heathen than in Christian lands. The same amount of money invested in salvation influences will produce two and one-half times as much result in the actual number of souls converted in the foreign field as at home.

4. The heathen are not far away. The money given the missionary cause to-day can be put in the hands of the missionary at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains, fifteen hundred miles back from the coast, in twenty-four hours, and it takes no longer to travel from here to China, into the very



heart of heathendom, than it did fifty years ago to go from New York to Washington.

5. The heathen are within easy reach of us; they are the purchase of the Son of God. He said to us, "Go preach the Gospel to every creature." How will you answer Him when he asks, "What hast thou done?"

Mrs. Ridnour had the money to purchase a camel's hair shawl, but was waiting for one that would better suit her fastidious taste than any then in the stores in her own city. And now that this subject of missions so pressed upon her heart and conscience, she thought to ease both, once for all, by sacrificing the shawl and giving the money to the cause of missions. To be sure she did not need the shawl, but it would be a sacrifice, nevertheless, for, woman like, she had thought about the matter until her "heart was set" on having one. Still, how light the sacrifice, for, when the decision was once made that she would do this act, she sent the money to the treasurer of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, heartily praying that God's blessing would go with it, and felt hardly a pang of regret at the loss of the shawl.

Do not think that this sister was a less devoted Christian than the average of her sisters in the Church, because she felt so little interest in the cause of missions. She was a woman who loved



the Church and worked for it with a never-flagging zeal. She labored faithfully in the ladies' home mission societies. She was efficient in all aid societies, at every festival or levee she always presided at the longest, the largest, and most beautifully arranged table in the hall, and was the hardest-worked woman on every such occasion. She was always on the committees for the different needs and charities of the city or the Church, and, lay it not against her, she was usually the prime mover in every donation party that *preyed* upon the pastor's family. She was quite a worker in the Sabbath-school and her place was seldom vacant at the prayer-meeting. Instead of Sister Ridnour being a less zealous Christian than her sisters, she was, in fact, rather more active in every good work, rather more faithful in all her Church duties than any of them all.

The day after Sister Ridnour made the sacrifice of the shawl she thought over all these things about as we have thought them of her. She became really filled with self, with her influence, her work, her prayers, her sacrifices, her great faithfulness, and all the many good things which she had done in the course of her Christian life; they all rose in gigantic proportion before her. But this deed, an act she felt sure no other woman in the Church would have done, seemed so praiseworthy, that she was sure God must be well pleased with her.



The thought of being "accepted in the Beloved" did not enter her mind. Why need one so far advanced in the spiritual life as she, stop and analyze her motives and desires like a Christian who had taken but a few steps on the King's highway? She could not stop to meditate; she must *do*. And was n't she doing? Who worked more faithfully?

That night Sister Ridnour dreamed that she saw the great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And she saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Name after name was called, and the souls passed on and up, and on and down. At last Sister Ridnour's name was called, and she dreamed that she responded, and the Judge placed her on the right hand, as she was sure she deserved to be. And as she stood there congratulating herself that all her sacrifices were over and she at last in the kingdom, the great Judge said, in a tone that made Sister Ridnour tremble, and every fiber of her being quiver with a dread such as when a mortal she had never experienced: "Step forth *all* who



were saved through the influence of Caroline Ridnour."

Away back in the innumerable throng there moved one, and then another, and another, who came at last to the front and stood before Caroline Ridnour. All strangers to Sister Ridnour. Not only strangers, but all were foreigners; people from some unknown clime, and to Sister Ridnour they seemed only dull, disagreeable, and repulsive creatures. She gazed over the throng among the faces she had known and loved nearly fifty years of her pilgrimage on earth, but not a person moved, not a face lighted up with an answering look of recognition; not a ray of gratitude or trust from one soul present.

"How many years were you a follower of the Lamb?" asked He who sat upon the throne.

Tremblingly she replied, "Over thirty years, and all those years I worked in Church and Sabbath-school. O, Lord, I am sure I must have helped some soul. I tried to be faithful; I seldom missed a sewing-circle; I always worked the hardest at the festivals; I led in all the donation parties; I gave to all the local charities; I never missed an evening in February when protracted meetings were held; I was a teacher in the Sunday-school, and never absent except when it was too cold, or too warm, when it rained or when it



snowed, when I had a headache, or when I was out of town;" and Mrs. Ridnour sighed as she thought that perhaps she had not, after all, been working so much for God's glory as for her own.

"Did what you liked, when it was convenient," said the voice of the Judge, as full of tears as when he wept over Jerusalem. Turning to the multitude, he said, "All who were ever under the influence of Caroline Ridnour step forth."

In front of her came her day-school scholars, of those years when she first tried to walk in the Christian's path, and before whom she was afraid to pray, and their children, and their children's children—down, down, clear to the end of time; all her Sunday-school scholars, with their husbands and their children and children's children; the servants who had been in her family with their families and all their descendants; all her neighbors, and the poor in the Church; her friends and acquaintances, with their families and loved ones; all whom she had met in society; in her travels at home and in foreign lands—a multitude such as Sister Ridnour could not number—and her heart grew chill and cold.

"I was her neighbor fifteen years, and she never spoke to me on the subject in which she professed to feel most interest," said one, turning to the Judge.



"I was at Sabbath-school the Sunday after my sister died. I wanted to be a Christian then, but Mrs. Ridnour was off on her Summer trip to the mountains, and before her return I lost all interest in the subject," said a girl whose heart had always seemed cold, and one whom Sister Ridnour had not particularly fancied.

"She told me it was useless to pray to the Virgin, but she never told me a better way," said a faithful nurse, who had cared for all four of Mrs. Ridnour's children.

All her children—her own flesh and blood—her grandchildren, her grandchildren's children and their children, a large company. Her oldest son, he whom his mother had really loved better than her own life, and to whom she raised her tearful eyes pleadingly as he said, "My mother loved me, I know she did. She taught me to *say* prayers, but my Sabbath-school teacher taught me to pray and led me to Jesus."

Her daughter, whom she had indulged in every pleasure, even when her conscience had told her she was wrong in doing this, said, "Mother was good to me in the wrong way. I have no hope of heaven. I did not train my children aright. My soul is lost."

Oh, the bitter wail of anguish that escaped Sister Ridnour's lips. With a gasp of horror, Car-



oline Ridnour cried out, pointing to the heathen from foreign lands, "Lord! Lord! are these all the garnered sheaves I bring with me? Is this the way I have done the work thou gavest me to do? Let me, I pray thee, return to earth; let me again have the opportunity to work for Jesus. Let me again be given the *privilege* to say to others, Ye must be born again; let me again have the ability to sacrifice the luxuries of life, that I may win souls for whom Christ died. I can not, can not endure an eternity like this!"

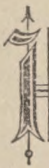
With a cry of agony, as a denial of the request came from the lips of the Judge, Mrs. Ridnour awoke.



## II.

### Sham and Pretense.

---

“ WISH, Aaron, that you would purchase a carriage like Mrs. Burbank's. Her husband bought it for her birthday present, and it cost only three hundred dollars. This old thing looks so shabby that when I meet Mrs. Burbank, or Mrs. Barton, or any of the ladies with whom I associate, I am exceedingly mortified ;” and Mrs. Mellen looked at the top and sides of the carriage in which they were riding with something quite like scorn in her pretty face.

“A ‘new carriage,’ eh? Why, I had n't thought but this was good for several years yet,” replied her husband. “A new carriage because some one else has one, Elinor?”

“That is just like you, Aaron, to commence to poke among my motives. Why do n't you say that I can have one?”

“Why, I could n't say yes to any thing that would take that amount of money just now without stopping to think over the matter,” and Mr.



Mellen looked around the carriage as his wife had done, but with a different result. "To tell you the truth, Elinor, if I could afford five hundred dollars for such a purpose just now, I should be loath to part with this old friend. We have taken a great deal of comfort in this carriage, and it yet looks really quite respectable. But, Elinor, a new one would be quite out of the question during these hard times," and Mr. Mellen touched the horse with the whip, and for a few minutes they rode in silence.

After awhile they reached the summit of the hill. The evening sunshine glimmered through the green of the trees, and stole through the boughs down to the grass, throwing the shadows and bits of golden light with a lavish hand. The gray rocks on an eastern hill, left bare by the washing of the waves ages ago, were flooded with the beauty of the evening light. But Mrs. Mellen did not see this picture hung before her, nor hear the sweet night sounds—the hushing of the wind, the cradle song of the birds, the sleepy monotone of the insects—or in any way show that she was touched by the tender charm of the sunset time. Her mental vision was filled with the desire of her heart, and her ears deaf to any tone but the last words of her husband, to which she at length replied by first quoting his words:

“‘Hard times!’ I do believe that a woman



never asked for a new thing that her husband did not plead 'hard times.' I am sure that your business is much better than Mr. Burbank's, and yet we do n't begin to live in their style. Mrs. Burbank keeps two servants and a seamstress, and Mrs. Barton has three servants, besides having two new silks since I had my old gray. Last Winter she newly furnished her parlors, and had new carpets for her chambers, and now they have a new carriage. I do think, Aaron, as economical as I am, I might have some wishes gratified. Say, dear, can't you let me have a carriage?"

"I do believe she would carry a jury of eleven but not of twelve if her husband was the twelfth;" and Mr. Mellen looked at his wife, and smiled.

"I believe you do equal the most contrary juryman that ever lived," replied his wife a little sharply, for she foresaw her hopes and plans of the last few weeks dashed to the ground by her husband's indifference to the matter; but her courage was equal to a case of more importance than even this, and she added coaxingly, "You said something about spending five hundred dollars. Now I'd be perfectly satisfied with a three hundred dollar carriage, and I do n't know but I would with one which cost a little less, so there are two hundred which you need not spend."

"Does n't the little wife see that if she has a



carriage of that style she must have a new gold-mounted harness so that things will match? Then this horse is not quite gay enough for such a harness; the barn and carriage house would have to be altered for a new carriage and horse, and when that was painted up, the house would look dingy; if the outside of the house was renovated, the inside would have to be, and it would end with new carpets and furniture, and all that sort of thing. I've been there before, my lady, and a husband is always the one to blame if he gets caught in the same trap twice. Now, for the other side. We have a good family carriage and horses; when you and I want our little, cosy ride all by ourselves, we want it whenever I am at leisure; sometimes it's just after a rain and quite muddy, and sometimes the sun is hot and it is dusty. Now, if we had a new carriage we should not like to soil it or crack the paint, though we might not say that in words, but we should miss a great many pleasant times. For your own use I should be glad, Elinor, to get you a new carriage, but when I tell you that I ought not to purchase one now, your good sense will see the necessity of making the best of it."

Mrs. Mellen sat silent for a few minutes. She was one of those women who silently and deliberately plan upon a matter, and to give up a cherished plan seemed almost an impossibility. She saw the



reasonableness of what her husband had said, but she also thought of what Mrs. Burbank had said the day before as they had fastened their horses at the posts in front of the home of a mutual acquaintance. "My dear Mrs. Mellen, you ought to have a 'birthday;' just see what a lovely present my husband made me on my last 'birthday!' I declare, I never before in all my life, have taken so much pleasure as I have with my new carriage." And a remark from Mrs. Barton quite similar to the one Mrs. Burbank made, came also to her mind, and she felt quite miserable and unhappy. She wished that she had no fashionable friends, and that she was not so foolish as to care what they said, and wondered if there were any place on earth where a lady could do just as she pleased, and yet be liked and respected for just what she was and not for her house, her furniture, her clothes, or her surroundings. Her husband saw by her countenance the conflict going on in her mind, and he at last said good-naturedly, "Speak, and let the worst be known."

She laughed in spite of her vexation, but she said: "It does seem strange to me how others get on so much faster than we do. It is only a few years since Mr. Burbank could n't afford his wife a new silk dress; she kept only one servant, and they had no carriage at all. And it is just so



with the Braytons and the Franklins. What you paid on that church debt would have bought me a splendid carriage and harness—and ever so much besides. I do think that we are not required——”

“Elinor!” said Mr. Mellen quickly. But he only spoke her name. He knew that if left to herself her own conscience would accuse her more keenly than would any words of his.

Slowly, but surely came the change in Elinor’s heart. She saw the firm, consistent principle that ruled her husband’s life; she saw herself always flying off on some tangent. She thought of the many comforts and luxuries with which she was surrounded, and she realized how foolish was her desire to sacrifice one moment’s comfort from the home happiness for the sake of a flattering notice or remark from some fashionable acquaintance, for whom in her heart she entertained but little real respect. And the noble and pure impulses which come so often to every womanly woman crushed out the selfishness and self-love which had been reigning and ruling in her heart for weeks past.

“The wave of meanness has gone over me, Aaron, and I ’m not washed away,” and she looked up with a smile so frank that her husband saw that every trace of unpleasantness had vanished. “You don’t know, however, how much I did want a carriage, but I seem to be some one else now, I care



so little for one. You shall not laugh at me, but I wanted it so that I actually prayed about it, and I was sure that God would answer my prayer."

"He has answered it," said her husband quietly. "He took away your desire for a selfish thing; he has given you new purposes and aims, and though that was not what you expected, yet it was a beautiful answer."

Through the gathering twilight they rode in silence, each heart filled with loving thoughts of the other, and each anxious that the future should find them more willing to do what was right and true, regardless of the frowns or the nods of the world around them.

As they passed the homes of the acquaintances of whom they had been speaking, Mr. Mellen said: "Would it help you to bear your disappointment any better if I should tell you that Messrs. Burbank and Barton are so involved in debt that unless they receive speedy help they must go under?"

Mrs. Mellen knew that her husband would not have told her this except for her good, and she pondered the subject, not only that evening, but for days; and she decided that for all time to come she would be a true woman, living a real life, and not one of mere sham and pretense.



### III.

## Peas in the Shoes.

---

THE next evening, after the decision made by Mr. Mellen in regard to the purchasing of a new carriage, Elinor sat reading in the library at her husband's table. Early in the evening he laid down his paper, stretched his arms, and laid his head back on his chair as though his day's work was over. His wife looked up, and said: "O, Aaron, I wish you had stopped reading before, I should have been so glad to have read aloud. I have been so interested in reading about the devotee who walked from Spain to Rome with peas in his shoes, suffering excruciating pain every step of the way. But another devotee, to whom the same penance was given, boiled the peas and walked in comfort. Did you know that the Roman Catholic believes in *three* kinds of penance? The secret, public, and solemn, and these are sometimes self-imposed by the way of satisfaction for sin? How dreadful this seems to us who believe that Jesus paid all the debt we owe. But, Aaron,



do you know that I believe that lots of Christians are daily practicing all these sorts of penance greatly to the discomfort of their own souls, and the souls of husband, wife, or children?"

Elinor waited a few minutes for her husband to reply, but he only looked at her and smiled, saying by his manner that he desired simply to be entertained by any thing wise or witty which she had to offer. Mrs. Mellen was so absorbed in her own thoughts that she failed to notice her husband's manner, and after awhile began again on the same subject.

"Wasn't it dreadful, Aaron, for that poor heathen to walk all the way to Rome in such agony that he could think only of self? He did not see the beautiful country through which he passed, the waving fields, the stately forests, the view from the mountain top, the clear rivers, the golden sand, the green pastures. He saw only the peas in his shoes. He thought only of the peas in his shoes and his own poor suffering feet and limbs. Now, I think, Aaron, that I've learned to boil the peas. I learned that a good while ago. I really can now trudge along in comfort, and how I do pity my friends who go limping along, groaning as they travel, in life's pilgrimage. I've lots of times offered them fire and water, and recommended them to boil their peas, but though it does



seem queer, they all seem to think that their peas can't be changed. There is Dr. Smith! Why, Aaron, he wears a regular 'champion of England' because Dr. Green has all the practice among the rich and influential, lives in a better house and drives a handsomer carriage. He is fretting about his luck, and groaning because his path is not just like Dr. Green's. He mortgaged his house to get a better carriage and improve his grounds; and repairs, repaints, and refurnishes. But the peas only multiply and grow harder. Only last Sunday the minister offered water and fire when he said, 'The life-path is very much alike to us all, if we'd only look up and not down, if we'd only look out and not in, if we'd only love our neighbor and not self. The same wise Father chooses for all his children, and he always chooses for us the safest path.' I looked over to Dr. Smith, hoping he'd take that part of the sermon, but his countenance did n't change, and I'm afraid it made no impression. I looked at his wife, but hardly expected she would think it could help her; she do n't take a very broad view of life. She sees that Mrs. Green has a fine house, good pictures, books, and statuary, is respected and sought after, and she puts wrong cause and effect together. *She* gets new furniture, repapers her parlors—has a 'dado'—orders her pictures, then wonders why it makes so



little difference with her position in society. To be sure, the poor soul has only one pea in her shoe, but that is because her shoe is so tight—yet that one pea hurts as though it were a vulgar peg.

“Mr. Brainard wears the little, round, blue Kentish pea, and, O, how sore they make him. You need n’t smile, Aaron, you know I am telling the truth. If he does n’t belong to our Church, I know ever so much about him. If Mr. Chalmers is made superintendent in the Sabbath-school, and Mr. Brainard has no office, his feet are one blister. If the minister does n’t consult him about his sermons and his Church-work, and does consult Mr. Blake, he is too lame to come to Church. If any public enterprise is started and he is not invited to be chairman and then made president, the peas are so painful that his face is full of contortions; and what is the worst feature of the case, his wife is one of those inoffensive creatures who allows him to put the same peas in her shoes. Now, if a husband and wife will only wear different peas, the suffering is not so intense; but where the same pain is endured by both, it greatly affects even the feelings of the most careless spectator. If the wife thinks the Church is ‘all run down,’ the husband will think so too; and if both turn their backs in disgust and sigh for the good old days when Bro. Sweet gave such heavenly sermons, nothing but a



miracle will empty their shoes before they reach the end of the pilgrimage. If the husband thinks the sermons are not as intellectual as a two hundred dollar lecture, the wife will examine with a microscope, and find the same element lacking; then both remain at home on the Sabbath, and nurse their wounds. When it comes to that it is quite probable the children will come home from Church limping, and the father and mother both wonder 'how the children happen to see things just as they are.' Don't you remember, Aaron, old Mr. Knight and his family? They were of that sort."

Mrs. Mellen reached a vase of flowers on the table, turned them around, and touched a blossom here and there caressingly. In a few minutes she commenced again, taking up the same topic.

"There is Mrs. Peterson, her peas are good clothes. That is, she suffers because she can not have a hat like Mrs. St. John, a dress like one which Mrs. General Longside wears, diamond earrings like Mrs. Sumner, laces and jewelry like some one else, never once thinking of how little consequence such things are to one's real happiness. And, Aaron,—I am almost ashamed to mention to you of my own sex—I have found out that Mrs. Gardner's peas are a cheap seat under the gallery in the House of the Lord, and not having a speaking acquaintance with Mrs. Senator



Broomcorn. Of course, it is too funny, only it is so sad! Over at the Main Street Church there are ever so many who are wearing peas because their Church is not more aristocratic! There would be some sense in wearing them, because it was not more holy! For years I thought that Mrs. Newcastle had all that one could desire, but one day I caught a glimpse of her heart, and found that 'It all availeth me not so long as I see Mordecai sitting at the king's gate,' and her Mordecai is a neighbor who is beloved by every body—sweet Mrs. Adams—and of whom every one, rich and poor, high and low, has a kind word to speak. Mrs. Newcastle is actually uncomfortable because some one is loved more than she is! I can't understand that feeling; but then I never set myself up as a monument of amiability. I do n't see what you are smiling over. If I do n't profess great goodness and am not a saint, yet, of the highest order, I do feel thankful that I can walk along my pleasant life-path with plenty of room in my shoes for what few boiled peas I have there. Not that I particularly ought to rejoice over my own high state of grace, but I can't help feeling thankful for the light which I have when I look at and pity my poor, suffering brethren and sisters."

Mr. Mellen took his arms down from above his head, leaned forward a little, and with an amused



look at his wife, said, "It seems to me, Elinor, that I've read somewhere something like what you say. Was n't there a man once who stood somewhere praying, 'I thank thee, O, Lord, that I am not like other men?' But do you know, dear that I am glad to hear that you have boiled that conservatory that you have been so anxious about all Summer, 'a conservatory just like Mrs. Barton's, you know!' And I am glad that you have sensibly concluded that you can get along without a fountain on the front lawn, one, you know, 'with a statue holding an umbrella like the one I saw in Worcester.' I suppose you have really emptied the carriage out of your shoes—good girl! But how about a seal-skin cloak for next Winter that you have mentioned once or twice every day, Sundays not excepted, since last Christmas? 'A cloak, you know, as good as the one Mr. Burgess bought his wife?' I knew, Elinor, if you could only see your peas you would either empty them out, or boil them."

"O, Aaron how small you always contrive to make me feel. If there is one grace in this wide world which I ought to have, it is humility. You need n't put on that smile again. 'T isn't your fault if I have n't it. Do you think, Aaron, that after all I am like my poor 'suffering brethren and sisters?'"



IV.

Modern Martyrdom.

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“**I** WAS out to the sewing-circle this afternoon, Aaron,” said Mrs. Mellen, as she was sitting in the library, one evening, with her husband.

“Is that so? Well, whose baby has a tooth? What woman has new boots? Whose servant-girl has walked disorderly this time? How many women were slaughtered, and who covered the dead with leaves?”

“You need n’t go on in any such strain, Aaron,” replied Mrs. Mellen, a little impatiently, to this raillery. “It does seem as though men thought there was something brilliant and witty in speaking jeeringly of woman’s work. I can’t think that you really *intend* to speak in a disrespectful way of women, for I know that you honor your mother with your whole heart, that you love your sisters, and, as Mrs. Sikes would remark, ‘I have the *insurance* to say that you make an *idle* of your wife.’ One of the by-laws of our society is, that there shall be no gossip. And, as for the silly or unim-



portant things said, I fancy that there are no more of that kind than are said by our husbands when they meet in lodge, or are out at the club till after midnight. We 'poor women' were chosen from all the world to be the wives of men—of my husband and my husband's friends—and if you did select simple creatures, that are not capable of talking sense when at a 'sewing-circle,' I should think it would be a prudent matter to keep the fact to yourselves, and not toss it forth so lightly."

"The wife of my bosom is no flatterer," groaned Mr. Mellen, with a very subdued look upon his manly face. "She is not 'the acquiescent little victim' we read about in 'Madame de Rémusat.' She does not cajole in all my faults and besetting sins. She does not fall before me and help me to become a domestic tyrant. Her skirts are clear of ever in the least being accessory to making me an egotist."

"I know you are sorry. I see it in your face. But, really, Aaron, I don't see why you *should* talk as you do. I've always felt as though you were superior to most of men. I do wish I had a thousand boys to train, instead of one splendid little fellow; I'd do my best to make every one reverence the name of woman next to that of his Maker. I hope, Aaron, you will not



allow yourself to speak that way again, even for the sake of the fun of stirring me up. But what I wanted to tell you was a remark that was made to-day, and which I can't get out of my head. There chanced to be a sudden hush in the conversation in the front parlor—we were at Dr. Green's—when some one said, in a voice pitched in a high, sharp, nervous key, 'I can't be a consistent Christian and work too hard, and I don't believe that there are many women who can.' The remark made me think of what your brother Fred said the other day, when I met him on the street and asked him about Henrietta. He said that she was 'not in a very high state of grace; in fact, was down by the cold streams of Babylon; felt as though she was the chief of sinners;' and he ran on in that sort of a way until I asked if she was not overworking. 'O no,' he replied, 'she is having a rest. The kitchen-girl is gone, and she is not troubled any more about stained coffee-cups or broken china. That is a great relief to her. The woman who has 'tormented' her life out by doing such 'wretched sewing' has left, and Henrietta has ceased to dream about ruffles and stitches dancing together in the church parlor. She has dropped all outside work except the care of Trinity Church, which she feels always will rest on her shoulders. The dinners at the Girls' Home,



on Saturdays, she still superintends. Of course she meets with the Domestic Science Club twice a month; goes to the Church sewing-circle; could n't give up her Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, if she had to be carried on her bed; helps at the Union Dorcas every week, because there are so many poor this year. Then there is the Home for the Friendless, the Old Ladies' Home, and the Orphan Asylum. She is supporting a little heathen girl in India, and of course must attend to the wants of her adopted child. She would feel that she was in danger of losing her soul if she stayed at home from prayer-meeting. She could n't give up the Reading Club, for the intellect must not grow dim from disuse. She has to attend the choir practice, and if she sings in the choir she must go to Choral Union, Monday evenings. No, I can't think it is overwork. Better go down and see her, Elinor, and find out why she is so depressed.' And he went off laughing. Of course, I knew that Fred was poking fun at his wife. It's a trait that runs in the family. But, after all, there was lots of truth in what he said. At the very sewing-circle to-day, where that woman said what I told you, the women were huddled around a quilt, breaking their backs in putting together what they considered a 'lovely' thing of thirteen hundred little pieces of bright cloth. And when Mrs. Pru-



dens heard the truthful remark of that sensible woman who found it impossible to live a consistent life and constantly overwork, she held up her hands in holy horror. Mrs. Upstart, with a shocked look, raised her eyes over her spectacles to Mrs. Alert, and some of the other ladies looked as though it had thundered from a clear sky. This afternoon I was thinking it all over, and I wondered if what made me impatient sometimes was n't my overwork. You need n't open your eyes. I do believe, Aaron, that you sometimes think I don't have very much to do. Any woman who has three little children, and is a real, true mother, just has her hands full, even if she does have 'all things added.' You need n't hasten to tell me that you know I'm a good mother, etc., etc. I know how you really feel toward me, but you do have the habit of looking unutterable things you *do n't* feel. Now, this very afternoon, when I was thinking over my 'upsetting' sin of impatience, a thing occurred which would have put a man out of sorts for the rest of the day."

"I do wish, Elinor, you would not speak so slightly of men as a class. I know you honored your father, that you loved your brothers, and—"

"I was in the back parlor," continued Mrs. Mellen, interrupting her husband with a pretense



of great dignity, "sewing on one of the baby's dresses. The baby was asleep in her crib, and Ned and Mary were playing in the bedroom. I was wondering if I ever should be so consistent a Christian that I should not be daily losing my self-respect, or feel that I had degraded myself in the eyes of my family. There was Ned and Mary already old enough to copy not only my actions but my words, and even the tone of my voice; and if my earnest prayers for them are to be answered, I must, in a great degree, answer them myself. I was sitting in a sort of heavenly rest, feeling that God would undertake for me; that he would give me the wisdom which I so much needed, and all I had to do was to trust in him. Already I was dimly comprehending what was meant by a life of faith. I was already climbing the Delectable Mountains, and could 'look away across the sea,' when my meditations were interrupted by hearing Ned say, 'Now, Mary, let *me* wear mamma's best bonnet.'

"'Why, children?' I exclaimed, in any but dulcet tones, and going to them, said, 'Why, you naughty little children!' Oh, Aaron, here I tumbled right down from the mountain, not 'into the highway toward the city,' but over 'on the left hand,' into the 'crooked lane' called 'Conceit.' But how *could* I help it? There was one child



dressed in my best bonnet, real lace collar—old and tender—light gloves, and holding a dirty doll dressed in my best lace handkerchief. The other child had a delicate wrap wound around his head, *à la* Madame de Stael, and his neck upheld by one of your soiled collars, with a large doll dressed in a newly ironed ruffled pillow-case. These, our ‘trustworthy children’—who, I had felt in my heart, were the best children about meddling with what did not belong to them that earth could bring forward—these children had been to my wardrobe drawers, and taken the last things I should have chosen to have given them. Both children cried, and exclaimed, ‘I’m not naughty.’ Just here Hester came in from the kitchen, and said that we were ‘out of Graham flour, and there were not eggs enough to mix up the batter for breakfast. The man had n’t brought the chickens for Sunday, and the lard jar was empty.’ You can’t think, Aaron, how for a few minutes I fretted and worried. You know I’ve been feeling miserably for a few days, and had thrown off care as much as was possible, but here was my load to take up again. I do n’t wonder that Jesus taught us to pray, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ He knew we could not endure. The resisting temptation may make strong characters, but, as a general thing, a woman can’t resist very long, and that is why *we* particularly



have need to 'watch that we enter not.' I do believe, Aaron, that nearly all the women who are fretful, fault-finding, and impatient—*disgracing the name of Christian*—are the overworked women of the world; women who not only have the care of the home, the sewing, the entertaining of friends, the training of the children, but take upon their shoulders also the care of society and the Churches. No wonder that half the time the heavens seem to be brass, and that God has forgotten to be gracious. No wonder they seem to be drifting from God, instead of drawing nearer. No wonder that, when they kneel to pray, the thought of the unfinished sewing creeps in as they say 'Our Father;' that when they beseech him to draw nigh they sigh as they think of the undusted room, or an unfinished garment; that, as their lips move in prayer, their thoughts wander more and more, and at last they rise from their knees, not having even entered the outer court, or caught a breath of the incense wafted from the holy of holies.

If it is true that we must, as far as in us lies, answer our own prayers in regard to feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, being kind to the stranger, and forgetting not the conversion of the heathen in every land; in regard to the upbringing of our own children; being given to hospitality; care for our own household—if, in regard to all



these we must work as well as pray, what *are* we going to leave out that the physical frame need not get over-exhausted and the mind perplexed and worried? I often think, Aaron, of your mother, always calm, never worried or flurried; plenty of time to read her Bible, to meditate and pray. But, then, she was n't born in December, during the biggest storm of the century! I wonder if I ever shall be like her. But it is n't all because it is I. It is n't simply because I've a large house to look after, servants to direct, and company all the time. I know women who live in cottages do their own work and have company only once in awhile, who are just so overworked, worried, and restless, and longing for rest. They do their own washing Monday mornings, in the afternoon put on their best silk or satin, and make calls all the afternoon. They will iron Tuesday, all their clothes covered with puffs and tucks except the husband's shirts; get up a great dinner for company on Wednesday, for unexpected friends who drop in. I do think I'd be more sensible there, I would put on a clean table-cloth, and give friends the same I thought good enough for my husband and children. Thursdays they are always at the sewing circle, leaving their children to play in the street when they return from school, and husband and children to eat a cold supper by them-



selves. I do believe some of our members do n't dare miss the circle for fear some one will think that their love for God's cause is growing cold. Of course, the house looks like distraction on Friday; but, then, as old lady Metcalf says, 'House-keeping is not a saving ordinance.' Saturday is the baking day and preparation for the Sabbath. The mending and sewing have been sandwiched in during the week at every possible space. Now, Aaron, don't you see these women do n't get any more time than I do for spiritual and intellectual growth?"

"The only paradise for women must be in the country. Let's go on a farm, Elinor," said Mr. Mellen smoothing out his daily over his knees.

Mrs. Mellen went on with her sewing for several minutes without replying to her husband. At last she said, without looking up: "Of course I know, Aaron, that you only say that because you think you ought to say something. I have visited enough at Aunt Harriet's and Aunt Kate's to know what a life on a farm means. I think that they both get more comfort than women usually get out of life. But I think that they would do that in whatever position they were placed. But look at the life of the wife of our average Western farmer. Back in New England, life on a farm, as we've seen it, is different from what it is anywhere



else. Our friends then lived near large cities and were independent in every respect. I think our Ann expressed a very correct idea of the life of a farmer's wife. She told me one day that a farmer near Randolph had asked her to marry him. "Did you say, 'yes?'" I inquired. 'I was tempted to,' she said. 'He has a good farm, a good little house of three rooms and fifteen head of stock, but he has six cows, raises corn and wheat, and lives six miles from town. I should have to make butter every day, and cook and do the work for hired men six months in the year. If I thought there would ever be a chance for my life to be easy I might have thought about it, but his mother and his sisters work just as hard now that his father is rich as they did when they were poor. They never have a cent of money of their own, and go looking as forlorn as poor folk. If I could only feel that it was n't such a slave's life I could do it, for I really do sort of like Sam.' *There is more testimony for you! and here is more still.* Ann's mother was in one day, and she was telling me how she had to work. She gets up in the morning and builds the fire—just think of a woman and mother doing that—dresses three children and gets breakfast at 6 o'clock. She says her wood is all in 'chunks,' or else she has to burn corn-cobs, and her fire all the time going out. She says she gets so tired



with the little ones pulling at her skirts as she works, that it seems as though she could not live, and she says she is growing so cross that she is ashamed to look a minister in the face. Say, Aaron, do the doctors of divinity make mention of any state of *physical* depravity?"

Mr. Mellen took up a paper from the table, looked it over, saying: "I saw something in this good Presbyterian paper to-night on this very subject. Here it is: 'A word for nervous people.'" He raised his eyes to his wife, who replied to the questioning look, "Go on, I'd be glad to hear it."

"Fretfulness, unlike many of the sins bequeathed us from a long line of ancestors is more the result of a weak body than a bad heart. We have seen people situated where necessity seemed to force them on, day after day, beyond their strength, until the nerves became so sensitive that it was almost an impossible thing for them to possess their souls with patience. There are others who are thought of as saints, because they inherit calmness, a good stomach, and an active liver. They go through life beloved by high and low, happy and blessed from birth to death, considered an honor to the Church, and are held up as examples of the power of religion. Always tranquil and cheerful, nerves never vibrating, voice never raised above a low, soft tone, every one met with a smile, and



friends are as numerous as the number of speaking acquaintances.’ ”

“I am so glad you read that,” said Mrs. Mel-  
len, when her husband ceased reading. “I have  
so *often* mourned over what I call my ‘upsetting  
sins,’ and have thought that you must often con-  
trast my life with your mother’s beautiful, ever  
pleasant manner of living. It seems to me as  
though there ought to be an equalization somehow  
established, and I have been thinking that those  
who have to constantly fight—and then endure the  
mortification of only half overcoming—will have a  
higher seat in the kingdom than these others who  
have so little of the martyr in them, and who sail  
to glory on flowery beds of ease. Indeed, Aaron, I  
think the comparing a nervous, sensitive over-  
worked woman to a martyr of old is a feeble com-  
parison. What is one stroke of the ax, or the  
standing upon a pile of burning fagots whose hot  
flames in an instant take away the breath so ready  
to be given? The being dropped into a caldron  
of burning oil—pain for an instant, then glory  
forever? Of course, I know that this requires  
courage and fortitude, but one rallies all one’s  
forces to meet it—it comes and passes, and is never  
to come again. But a trouble that worries, frus-  
trates, confounds, stings, and stabs, at which you  
strike or attempt to put aside, or one which you




know you must carry, though it fills you with contempt and disgust—yes, give me my choice and I'd take the burning oil or the stroke of the ax. A woman who will endure hard work, poverty, or an unloving husband in silence, to the end—there is no place in heaven too good for her. I am glad that there is a loving Father's hand that leads us through the rough places as well as through the green pastures and by the still waters. And I am going to try not to add to my unhappiness when I have been impatient or unreasonable, by thinking that I have a heart depraved above all hearts, but lay the sin at the right door, and give my poor *depraved* body rest from care and overwork, so that I need not sin again from the same cause."



V.

## Footprints.

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 NE rainy day we were rummaging a drawer that contained remembrances of our earlier life, and we came across an old portfolio full of poems, essays, letters, and compositions that were placed there in the early teens.

In the collection we found a parody called "Footprints." How well we remember when the boy across the aisle tossed it to our desk with a note, asking for help to "get it on its *feet*." Nothing loath, as usual, to help along any fun, we added to the catalectic or acephalous, or cut from the hypermeter line, until at last, between us—Johnny Cotton and I—the *poem* was finished, and we thought it rather superior to the original by Longfellow. We thought that our "Psalm of Life," with its taking title would, doubtless, aid in helping us make *footprints* which no ocean of oblivion ever could obliterate. But just as the parody was finished, with my usual luck, having forgotten to watch as well as play, the production fell into the



head master's hands, and what did he do but make us—the youngest scholars in the school—come on the platform and read to the young gentlemen and ladies our effusion! O, the shouts of laughter, the shaking of the fat cheeks of the master, and the covered mouths of the astonished assistants—an expressive “Trop! trop!” from our French teacher, to which any “too, too!” of this æsthetic age would fail to do justice. Were n't we mad? And ever since then, haven't we felt a disgust for “home-made” *poetry*?

But over that parody, as I sat on the floor that rainy day to read it, I laughed, I wondered, and I cried. Then the title of the parody fixed itself in my mind, and I thought about “Footprints” in general; about the footprints made by Johnny and his seat-mate; the footprints which I had made, and which the class-mate, Ruth Chalmers, who sat the other side of me had made; about the great anxiety every one falls into to make footprints, if not to “leave behind,” to make them so that all their contemporaries exclaim to each other as they see them, “Behold.” Instead of being willing to grow on and on, like the arbutus hidden from the gaze of the careless eye, we want to stand forth like the sunflower, turning our faces toward our god—the applause of men.

Instead of wishing to have our lives poured out



like the silent dew to bless the world and make it more fruitful, while we ourselves remain hidden away, we are thinking how we can, by the bray of noisy brass, make known our excellencies. Instead of going through time's thistle field, and quietly taking off the ripened heads, or pulling up the obnoxious weeds to make the path pleasanter for those who follow, we want, where lies every thistle-head or strong-rooted weed, to set up a stone to our honor and glory.

As Christians we are anxious to ride in the chariot with our leader, but not willing to go on the battle-field as a common soldier.

We have often wondered why this feeling is so universal. Is it because from our earliest childhood, parents, teachers, and friends spur on the young to greater mental activity by exciting in their minds a desire for fame—for making footprints toward greatness—toward what the *world* calls greatness? “Get your lessons, do well, and may be you will yet become president of the United States,” has been said by hundreds of teachers in every State in the Union.

What a pity that we can not by imagination realize the discomforts of greatness, the restlessness of the rich, so that instead of wealth and greatness being the one thing desired, they should be among the last. What a pity that we do not stop



to think that a thing which lives so much out of doors is a source of decided uncomfortableness to the possessor. All their successes are known to the world as well as all their griefs. Nothing is held sacred; the public eye must gaze not only upon the coronation of the queen, but the death-bed scene of her heart's dearest treasure.

Of the three boys and two girls who helped on the "poems" found in that old portfolio, one left footprints in which all might safely walk, and he is now singing the songs of the redeemed before his Father's throne.

The other, "Charlie"—I read his sermons in the New York dailies; and his life is like his sermons, simple, grand, pure, and Christ-like.

"Johnny" is in Maine, turning the world upside down. He has "degrees" and titles added to his name, but I do not know what kind of footprints he is making.

The girl who sat the other side of me, Ruth Chalmers—it was of Ruth whom I wished to speak when I took my pen to write about "Footprints."

Ruth was an orphan. At thirteen she lost wealth, father and mother. Poor, homely, quick-tempered, impulsive, frank, and generous—her aunt, the strictest of strict Pharisees, took the child to train in the way she should go. Poor Ruth! Need we say that? Her mother left her in God's



hand, with perfect confidence that he would lead her child in just the right way—in the way that would end on the mountain-top, at the gate of the kingdom. Rich Ruth, with such a guardian! He saw the whole length of the road, through the valley and up the mountain-side; we saw only a little way.

It seemed hard because Ruth could not dress as well as her school companions. But false pride was stabbed in the heart during those years when we all loved her so in her dark calico dresses. Taste was also cultivated. The art and science of making *minus plus*, taught only in the school of poverty, and learned only by the best mathematicians of her sex, she learned perfectly.

Every mother thinks her child pretty. Ruth's aunt thought her niece homely, and conscientiously told her thoughts—vanity died.

We *will* say "poor Ruth" when we think of her temper. She overcame ninety-nine times, but the hundredth came too often. Parents would have pitied. Her aunt punished her. Ruth learned patience.

Her impulsiveness—it did seem as though it could do her no harm. How we loved her when she threw one arm across our shoulders, bent forward to look us in the face, and in a plaintive tone confessed that she'd been rude or cross, and begged



pardon. How we honored her when she rushed to the master, saying, "Excuse her! Excuse her! Blame no one but me. I alone am to blame." But a heart carried in sight is too often needlessly wounded, and she was taught self-control. God was constantly at work chipping the marble, but we only saw the work of the chisel, and not the guiding hand.

Ruth at last learned to trust in her mother's Savior, to cast all her care on him, and to follow him. We often wondered why God led her in the way he did—up steep, tangled, wild, rough paths.

Years ago Ruth married. Dear children came to her home. With all her heart she loved them. God took them home to himself—all of them. God saw what a strong woman she could become. He knew that she could endure, and that she was worth the perfecting into his own image. But she grew weary and faint with the burden he cast upon her, and cried out, "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul!" God heard her cry, and drew her nearer to himself. She realized that it grieved her Savior if she doubted his love; that it was just because he loved her so that he led her in the way she had walked; that he knew every step of the way; that he had trodden a far rougher road that he might be able to comfort and direct her; that if there had been



*any other* way, any easier path to the kingdom, he would surely have chosen it for her. She leaned hard on him, and found his grace sufficient.

Ruth found great peace as she walked with God. She found the cross heavy when she unwillingly bore it, but now that she bears it willingly it bears her up. There is no rough way to her feet now. She has great pleasure in living and working for her Master, but she often looks across from the mountain-top into the celestial city; and among the great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, which stand before the throne, crying, "Salvation to our God, and unto the Lamb," she knows stand her parents, her sisters, her kindred. There are her children, whom she proudly hoped to teach the wisdom of this world—but instead they are learning the wisdom and the glory of the heavenly, and they will, by and by, lead her up Mount Zion, and show her the wonders of the golden city.

Ruth Chalmers has learned to walk in her Savior's footsteps, and she follows so closely in his path that all who know or see can safely be guided by Ruth's footprints—by *all* her footprints. Alas! that any who are walking in the same pathway should desire to hide footprints caused by ignorance, folly, or sinfulness. This desire to hide from the world some of our life-work comes only to those



who are working for applause, for notoriety ; to those to whom it matters not what they *are*, if only others think they are what they seem.

In education, the end is often mistaken for the means. The whole process seems to be a system of cramming, and not learning ; a desire for sufficient with which to make a display, but no thought of learning simply for the satisfaction it gives one's own self. This inordinate desire for seeming to be what we would like to be, instead of what we are ; this desire for praise and the applause of the world, or, as many call it, in regard to self, *for appreciation*, is injuring not only society and individuals, but also Churches—pastor and people.

Sometimes, by accident, what should have been only a stone in the wall of the Church has been made a pillar. The mistake is soon discovered ; the edifice is in danger. But what is to be done ? Pillar he is, and pillar he intends to remain. The storms come through the wall, but it is much more imposing to be a pillar than to fill a chink ! He puts forth renewed effort to make himself and others think him fitted for the place he fills. He spends money freely ; he talks in temperance meetings ; he is strong for woman's suffrage—if it is the popular thing ; he is “ alderman in his native city,” when he can get the position ; he suddenly becomes



a "popular" worker in Sabbath-schools; he is in favor of any and every thing which will bring his name into the newspapers and before the public.

Thomas à Kempis says: "Be not proud of thy good works, for the judgment of God is far different from the judgment of men."

God loves sincerity and simplicity—even though it may go hand in hand with weakness and ignorance. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him."

A minister, whose Church enjoyed a great revival, was one day thinking how effective he was in the cause of the Master, and he thought he would question the young converts in regard to the first cause of their thoughtfulness on the subject of their soul's salvation. To his utter surprise he found that nearly every one could trace, either directly or indirectly, their first interest to the words of a pious old lady, who for four years had been an invalid in her own chamber. The pastor never again looked with pride upon any work he seemed to promote. He never again dared to gaze with complacency upon what seemed to be his own footprints. He worked on faithfully, caring only to please his Master, willing himself to be hidden away.

So many Christians feel as did the disciples before they fully learned Christ's mission—that to be



his followers is to share in the glory and honors of the Church below, until they are called to receive their crown and everlasting honors in the Church above. And it seems to be harder, year by year, for one to seek not the seat at the right or the left hand, but allow others to take the coveted place, and himself go farther down and serve.

It takes a peculiar love for the Master to learn that it is only the poor in spirit who possess their souls in the plenitude of peace. To the heart that desires to make footprints that shall be gazed upon with wonder and praise comes a great disquietude, a restlessness, and a tormenting anxiety which forever gnaws but is never satiated.

Instead of "riding in the chariot," instead of the path of ease, comfort and distinction—instead of longing for *such* a life while on the journey to the kingdom, if one tries to recognize the Lord's "little ones," if he seeks the forlorn, the poor, and the ignorant—looking for the Lord's features in the sad and the lonely—he will have his mind too full, and will be too anxious about following in his Master's footsteps to think much about what the world will think of the footprints he himself will leave behind.

Though Christianity may sometimes reveal itself in such array as to attract attention, may sometimes be attracted to the pomp and glory of this



world, there is no heart in it. Christ looks with a peculiar love on the poor, the needy, the lonely, the suffering, and the simple. Most of the great fires in the Christian world have been kindled by these "little ones."

The character which the Lord forms within us is one at variance with all our ideas of natural greatness. We know that we can actually serve but one object. We are either striving to obtain the prize of earthly endeavor, or the unseen peace and joy obtained by a heart intensely set on doing the will of the Father. Christ does not trust himself to a divided heart; of this, as Christians, we are aware.

There are many gains and many losses in Christ besides the great loss of the salvation of the soul. "We are kept poor by what we miss, as well as by what we lose." A *little* more sacrifice, a *little* more patience, just a *little* more perseverance, and to what might we not attain! O, the love, the peace, the rest, the power we lose by this lack! Sometimes we hesitate about going on—have no desire to "press forward"—dare not say "Thy will," lest He will lead where we do not wish to follow. We are afraid of our position in society; afraid of our ease; afraid of our comfort; afraid of what "*they will say*," cowards that we are!

Sometimes we fail to make the right footprints



because we are too anxious to do some greater work than the duty next before us. The little deeds that require sacrifice, which bring happiness to others; the putting self out of sight that we may give comfort to our friends; the little kindnesses given us to do, we overlook in our search for some deed requiring a strength of mind and soul which will make its impress on beholders. We have seen Churches of a large membership, all anxious to serve the blessed Savior, who has done so much for them, bow humbly before their Maker when the pastor offered prayer, sing with fervor,

“O, for a thousand tongues to sing  
My great Redeemer’s praise,”

and then sit silent through prayer or conference meeting, only as the pastor called on them by name, asking them to speak or pray.

With full hearts these same Church members will sing,

“O, may it all my powers engage  
To do my Master’s will,”

and every one of them refuse the overtasked Sunday-school superintendent, when he *begs* them to lend a helping hand; turn their backs on a weak, struggling choir, which needs their help in leading the praise in song on the Sabbath; or think it too




much trouble to open their kitchen, dining-room, or parlor door for a feeble class-meeting, that is freezing to death in one corner of a barn of a church. The Sabbath-school class disappears; the choir worries out a miserable existence, dying an unhonored death; the class-meeting ends in bringing together only the leader and his wife. The Church mourns, and goes on singing and sighing for work to do for the Master. Alas for the footprints!



## VI.

### Sentimental Christianity.

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E have met but very few men who were sentimentalists, yet, as we look over the list of our acquaintances, we find here and there one of the very tenderest kind. But where we find one such man, we find a score of women, who, in beautiful rooms, recline in luxurious easy chairs, with a mystic book, from which they read the poetic effusions of some religionist. They delight in fervent rhapsodies of golden streets, angel's harps, and heavenly glory. They enjoy the beauty and poetry of religion, and hope to float on the perfumed air to the very gates of the celestial city. They fancy it is an easy thing to give up pleasure, love the sinner, care for the sick and needy, and long for the time when they will meet their Savior and say to him, "I cheerfully gave up all for thee." The real state of the case would be, that if they should suddenly be transported, with all the world, to the open gate of the New Jerusalem, they would look over the crowd, and if the poor,



the ragged, the ignorant, as we see them in this world, were all entering, the "sentimental" Christians would hold up their clean skirts, and wait to see if any of "our set" were going in.

With many of us there is too much passing by on the other side and not enough of the stooping, uplifting, and personal help which makes the rocky road to Jericho so beautiful a picture to the mind's eye.

There is a vast difference between that pure and undefiled religion that keeps one unspotted from the world, that cares for the sick, the poor, and the weary, and this self-concentrated sentimentalism. There is a great difference between reading about doing the will of the Father and the doing his will with earnestness and zeal. A difference between wishing to do well and doing well—between *bene-volentia* and *bene-factio*.

The reading and the wishing, without the practicing, causes one's piety to be absorbed in self; makes one strive for a kind of monastic piety, while the life is empty of active duties and Christian charity. To us there is no lower type of human selfishness than that shown by one who is so engrossed in the work of saving his own soul that he is practically indifferent to the world around him, excepting, perhaps, a few congenial companions or friends.



Publishers state that religious books are in great demand, and many of them are read by those who have had only a superficial religious experience, and to them the books are only a mysticism; but thinking that they comprehend, and that they enjoy the same length, and breadth, and height, and depth, they speak of these religious truths in a flippant manner. To those who hear such expressions, and do not understand the true spiritual state of the speaker, only knowing that their words and their lives do not correspond, they are the cause of being to them a handicap in the race of life.

How often we hear, "All is on the altar;" "We've given all for Christ;" "Our lives are consecrated to his service," and like testimonies. We think that they believe themselves sincere, and we doubt not that they think themselves honoring the profession they make, but when the cause of Christ needs five or ten dollars which they could give by practicing a little self-denial, such a test of their sincerity has found them weighed and wanting. When the evening comes for prayer-meeting, it is cloudy, or cold, or too warm for comfort, and with the thought, "but few will be out, and the meeting will be dull," they resign themselves to a new book and the comfort of home. When the afternoon comes for the missionary meeting, some home duty which would cheerfully have been laid aside if an



invitation had come to visit a near or an honored friend, but now, which seems sufficient excuse, keeps them away from the place of prayer, leaving the support and the interest of the meetings to the care of those who believe in the "doing" of the will of the Father, who believe that faith without works is all in vain.

Christ's words, "I am with you alway," have a deep meaning to his children. What we do for his "little ones," his "poor," we do for him. We are so apt to forget that the "little ones" do not mean simply the children, or the "poor," those who alone suffer for food and raiment. There are more hungry ones on earth starving for love, sympathy, a kind look or word, than for the "meat which perisheth." There are many of his own "little ones" hidden away waiting for the friendly hand to brush off the shyness which covers their souls from mortal eyes, or keeps them away from the face of the Father. We are too apt to think that it is always from the classes below us where the "little ones" are found. There is many and many a soul, rich in this world's goods, who is groping in the dark, looking and longing to find access to the Father, or for a better way of serving him whom he has already found. In whatever class of society we are, we can look up as well as down to find those who need our help. The great pity



is, many do not have—shall I say it?—do not have the *good sense* to treat both classes with equal respect.

Several years ago I had a colored washer-woman, to whom I was much attached. I wrote for her letters to her friends, and learned her sad life-history. I tried for nearly a year to teach her to read, until she gave up in despair, saying one day, “It is no use, I am too old. If I only *could* have learned when I was a child. Why! Mis’s Frances, my father was the smartest lawyer in the State of Missouri, and sometimes his blood, in my veins, boils, I feel my degradation so.”

“I wish, Charlotte, that you were a Christian,” I quietly replied, as I saw the look of anguish in her beautiful eyes; “then it all would be made up to you in the other world.”

“Do n’t talk to me that way. God never was, he is n’t, and never will be good to a ‘nigger,’ and those that call themselves his children are the same bitter toward us. To tell you the plain truth, I think I’m a heap sight better woman than some of the high-toned Church members. I works for heaps of ’em, and it’s mighty mean most of ’em is. Last week—Tuesday—that dreadful cold day, I washed for Mis’s Ray. She is one of the *awful* pious ones. She *always* gives a big wash, *always* scolds about the way it’s done—and *you* know I’m



a good washer—she beats me down in my price, and, then, when I'm tired to death, makes me go to the store after my pay. But the meanest thing she does—and *every* thing she does is mean enough—she never gives me half enough for my dinner, and what she does give me she shoves out into the wash room—wet and cold that it is—about as you fling out bones to your dog. If that ar' woman has religion, I do n't want none of it. If she will be in heaven, I'd rather be somewhere else."

What could I say? Mrs. Ray says God has done a great work for her, and is always asking other Christians to come up on the mount where she is, "in heaven's border land." How often, without knowing what we are doing, as Christians we give, instead of bread, only a stone.

It is very hard to believe that God does all the work, and that one never has to answer one's own prayers. It certainly is a delightful faith to feel that all that is required of us is "to sit and sing ourselves away to everlasting bliss;" simply fold the hands and float away to heaven. Many are trying to do this, we believe. We read our Bibles, we sing, we pray, we read the books on the higher life; the biographies of good men, whose besetting sins and battles with self and Satan are never "found in print," and with hearts full of good



emotions and tender sensibility, say, Lord! Lord! forgetting that this is not all that is required.

We have been idle in our Master's vineyard so long that our spiritual blood is poor, and we are in danger of spiritual paralysis. We think we are overcoming self, when we are simply so indolent that nothing ever can disturb us.

We may deceive ourselves as we will, we are not following Christ when we refuse to *work* for him. *Bare negative goodness is not enough*, but a life of positive holiness is required. Such a life does not consist in going to Church because we get there the food that just suits our taste; working in Sabbath or mission school, because such work gratifies our natural inclinations; putting on charitable deeds like phylacteries—all these acts are only a small, if any, part of the Christ-likeness of life.

If we have trifled with Christianity long enough and desire to find the plane of the higher life, and have Christ *dwell in us*, we have only to open the door of our heart. It opens from the inside.

We *say* that we want him there, but we wonder if we do actually want him constantly present; *always* looking into our life-work and our motives; want him to go with us into the kitchen, the nursery, or when we "run in" to see a neighbor. Yes, we know that God sees us. We learned that



in childhood, but, somehow, do n't we feel as though he looked upon some of our acts from a distance. We realize that he sees every act of our neighbor, but of *our* words, and thoughts, and deeds—we can not realize the fact with the same force.


If we really want the presence, it is only to ask that our hearts be made so pure, so holy that each will be a temple wherein he may dwell; it is only to study to know his will; *study* his Word, listen to his voice, follow his commands, and then we can show our faith by our works. We will seek for the pure religion of the Gospel, instead of a conglomerate sort gathered from Kempis, Madame Guyon, Rutherford, Baxter, Swedenborg, Murray, Beecher, Swing, Bushnell, Dora Greenwell, Mrs. Palmer; and lesser lights.



## VII.

### Our Best for the Master.

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RS. ALZIRUS BROWN was one day waiting in the store for a clerk to bring a hood that would match her seal-skin cloak. As she sat by the counter she opened her Russia-leather hand-bag to see if she had money enough to pay for the hood, as she had not really started on a shopping expedition when she left home. In taking out her money she also took out a leaf-tract, published by some missionary society, with this for the heading: "Our Best for the Master." It gave a touching account of a poor heathen woman in India who had two children, one a beautiful, perfect boy, and the other a blind girl. Her sorrow was great because she felt that the god was angry with her because one child was a girl and blind. If she had not offended him in some way, both would have been boys, and she would have been so happy. The blindness she did not mind so much, but to have a poor, despised girl was more than



she could bear, and at whatever cost the god must be appeased.

One day the lady missionary found the basket-cradle empty, and the mother weeping in agony at its side. It was the blind girl that remained—the perfect, beautiful, dearly loved boy had been sacrificed by being thrown into the Ganges, in order to appease the fancied displeasure of her god!

The missionary lady asked why, if she must sacrifice one, had it not been the blind girl?

“Ah, that was my great grief,” she replied, “I could not offer a girl when I had a boy, nor a blind child when I had a perfect one. The god must always have the best. Alas! alas! the sunshine of my heart has gone out forever!” And the poor mother beat her breast and tore her hair in agony.

The missionary lady asked if we, with our purer faith, are always thus consistent. “Do we give the best of our time, talents, property, influence, and affection to our King; to him who gave his best—his only Son—for us, to save us from just such ignorance, superstition, such a life of misery and degradation as that of the heathen woman; who gave his dearly beloved Son that we might have peace and joy in this life, and everlasting joy in the life eternal; to him, do *we* render our best?”

Mrs. Brown laid the tract back into the hand-



bag. She counted her money, and folded the seventy-five dollars she was intending to spend for the hood, and placed it inside the tract. When the clerk came back with just the hood she desired, she said, "I've changed my mind about the hood; I'll take a good worsted one," and laid two silver dollars on the counter, saying to herself, "Seventy-five dollars for the heathen, and two dollars for a hood; that *does* seem better than two dollars for the heathen and seventy-five for the hood. I would rather like to know if that seal-skin hood helps save a soul."

A few days after, as a friend saw her inclose a check for seventy-five dollars in a letter directed to the treasurer of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, she asked, "What is that for, Mrs. Brown?"


"Only a seal-skin hood to India," was the reply.



## VIII.

# God's Wonderful Love.

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OD'S love is so high that it reaches heaven—even into glory—so low that it stoops to the vilest sinner; the length is so great that it can not be measured—reaching into eternal blessedness; and the breadth is so broad that it takes in every human creature; and yet, at prayer-meeting, not long ago, I heard one of God's saints doubting God's willingness to give him the desire of his heart—the fullness of the love of Christ. The promise is, that if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, *we shall be filled.*

I have to-day been reading Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, in the third chapter. Like the Master, Paul asks for a perfect state for those for whom he prays. I am so glad that the door of the "inner room" flew open, and all the world could hear Paul's prayer; and if Paul dare ask such perfect gifts for these poor, ignorant Gentile converts, can we not ask them for the Church of to-day?



This Church at Ephesus was made up of slaves, subject to tyrannical masters, and full of petty vices; mothers with poverty, and inherited low tastes, with which to contend; thieves (Eph. iv, 28), whom Paul desired to "steal no more." And in the fifth chapter he wants to present such a Church as "holy, and without blemish."

So often when we sigh for this length and breadth, and height and depth of the love of Christ, we feel as though it was not meant for us. Ministers—who have only to think and pray and read, and go about doing good—this blessing is for them. Of course, they realize that they *can not* do their life-work without it. For women who have leisure, and can find time for devout reading, meditation and prayer—they can be holy. For those who do not have to spend the time barring the door and window against merciless poverty, who is constantly trying to come in and make himself at home—they *can rest in Jesus*. When our lives are full of sunshine, and we dwell in the midst of peace and prosperity, we see the hand of Providence, and we can realize that God leads us; but, when trouble comes, when friends forsake, when poverty walks in, when loved ones leave us, then we feel as though God had forgotten and forsaken us.

Isaiah asks, "Can a woman forsake her suck-



ing child? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted!"

The prophet says that God's love is stronger than the love of a mother. And mother-love is the strongest and most beautiful thing in all the world. The mother-love that so cheerfully gives sleepless nights and wearisome days in the helpless infancy; that toiled, and planned, and worked, early and late, that we might be well clothed, and educated even better than she herself had been. The love that follows the wayward son the wide world over, and never ceases to pray for his return and for his salvation. The love that clings to the daughter, and would give her a welcome, though the whole world look upon her with scorn and with contempt. And to this Being whose love is beyond human comprehension—who is love itself—we come doubtingly. Certainly, such children must grieve the Father far more than can those who never knew his wondrous love.

Too often we come to him thinking *perhaps* he hears us, or it may be possible he does not regard us. If it is God who gives us the desire to pray, is not that the evidence he will hear?



If we have the faith—that living faith which enables us to keep God's word—we have the faith which brings the answer to prayer, and when we ask we receive. When we daily pray, “lead us not into temptation,” our Father looks into our future, and he loves us so that he answers the petition and denies us something upon which we have set our heart. Then we declare that some other petition is not answered, and God does not love us.

My darling child fell from her chair and injured the elbow-joint. The arm was badly swollen and very painful. Several times when I bandaged it she exclaimed, as I hurt her, “You don't love me, mamma!” Mothers, tell me if all the pain my child suffered was not doubled in my own heart? Yet I *had* to make her suffer, or her arm would be permanently stiff, and *she* would suffer for life.

How many of us actually feel as though God's love was really, constantly, and unchangeably greater than our mother's love for us? Is God to us a being to whom we can go, not only reverently but confidingly? Have we really faith in him, or have we not?

Christ does not ask of thee,  
Faith in thy faith,  
But only faith in him.

And this he meant by saying, ‘Come to me.’”



The source of all unbelief is always sin, and for this reason the Bible treats unbelief as punishable. The greatest skeptic of the age would become a saint if he could get rid of his unbelief.


It often seems as though many of God's children tried to hold God off instead of trying to draw near to him. I remember a prayer I've heard a friend offer at the family altar: "O, thou great Jehovah, to whom angels bow, and before whom archangels veil their faces, we poor, sinful mortals dare not come into thy presence;" and all through the prayer he held himself away off from "Our Father." If we will only accept God as *our Father* and Christ as our soul's most familiar friend, we shall begin to realize what a loving heart has God the Father, and what a friend we have in Jesus. It is our own fault if we do not draw near to and dwell in such communion with God as to realize constantly his great and wonderful love to us.



## IX.

### Mission·Work·in·Xenia.

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“ DO N'T see, ladies, how you can consent to live without a missionary society,” said Mrs. Fairchild one day when she was visiting in Xenia. “Do n't you believe in missions, or do n't you *care* to send the good news of a Savior's love to those who are dying, a thousand each day, in heathen lands, without any knowledge of him who died to redeem them as much as he did to redeem you or me?”

“O, yes, we believe in missions, but they *cost* so much,” said Mrs. Sparsely, who saved every cent she could against some imaginary time of need, forgetting that Jesus told her not to lay up treasures on earth, but do as she would be done by, and leave God to “clothe” her, for her “heavenly Father knoweth” that she has need of these things.

“Yes, I know they cost. They cost the life of the Son of God. They cost tears and heart-aches on the part of men and women who have



given up all that was dear to them on earth, taken their lives in their hands, and gone to foreign fields to spread the glad tidings of 'Peace on earth.' It costs sorrow unspeakable for the father to bid his daughter farewell, knowing she is braving danger, sickness, and death, for conscience' sake. It costs agony, only such as mothers know, to see the first-born, the darling son, depart with the hope of never a reunion in this world. Yes, I know that missions 'cost,' but will it not cost us more to *deny ourselves* the blessed privilege of working in this glorious cause?" and Mrs. Fairchild, who was growing more earnest as she talked, here laid her bit of patchwork in her lap, and looking at the minister's wife, who sat near said, "How does it happen that you have no auxiliary here? I have often seen great good done when the minister's wife has been earnest in the cause. Why, up in our town, we have a mite of a creature for a minister's wife, but she does more for missions than all the other women in the Church. We have over sixty members, and since they began to be in earnest in foreign missionary work, they seem like people arisen from the dead in regard to their own Church work."

"Yes, I know Sister Gill has been of great use," replied the minister's wife, "but she has only two children while I have five. Really, I do n't see where I could find time to do any more than I am



doing. There is one afternoon, every two weeks, to this 'Dorcas;' one afternoon each month to the temperance; one afternoon every week to the woman's prayer-meeting; one evening to prayer-meeting, one to class, and one to choir rehearsal, besides the calls and the invitations out to spend the day. As it is, I don't get time to read the papers and magazines."

"I don't think we are *required* to make so many sacrifices, Mrs. Fairchild," said Miss Elinwood, who sat in an easy-chair turning over the leaves of a scrap-book. "Now, I never could see the sense in a continual harping on the subject of 'heathen' and 'missions.' If the heathen never hear of Jesus they will be saved, if they do as well as they know how. I heard our minister say so, and because they suffer terribly in this world—well, this life is short, and it does n't matter much how 't is passed. See how many in this country reject Christ, and it will soon be the same in heathen lands; they will not all accept him, and I think it actually foolish to give them the chance to reject their Savior. The Bible says it will be better for Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for the cities that have received light. Of course that means, in this age, heathen lands and our land. I am so tired of the demands made upon us, that sometimes I have half a mind to fold my hands and



do nothing. As Mrs. Greet just said, I do n't see where we could crowd in any more, and we certainly could not do without the societies we have. This 'Dorcas' is *such* a good place to get acquainted. None of us, but Mrs. Greet and Mrs. Powers, and perhaps one or two others, ever go to the evening meetings, so we never should see each other if it was n't for the 'Dorcas' or the temperance society. Then the 'Dorcas' gets up all the levees, festivals, socials, donation parties, and exhibitions of all sorts. We made seventy-five dollars at our last Punch and Judy show, and seventy-five dollars is not to be sneered at in a Church like ours; and at our temperance meetings we have *such* good times. We got up 'Ten Nights in a Bar Room' not long ago, and gave it in the church; made lots of money and had no end of fun. I think missionary societies are so poky."

After Miss Elinwood spoke there was silence for a little time, as if the subject under discussion would be dropped, and fearing lest it would be, Mrs. Fairchild, looking toward the lady whom she was visiting, said: "How shall we get over the texts, '*Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?*' '*Jesus Christ tasted death for every man!*' We all of us know that *every body* is invited to the Gospel feast. The very last words of our Savior to us were, '*Go ye, therefore, and*



teach *all* nations,' or as Clarke renders it, 'Go ye, therefore, and make *disciples* of *all nations*,' 'teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'"

"That does sound as though it meant we should do something more than stand like the five little chickens, and 'sigh' and 'wish,'" said Mrs. Powers, an elderly lady, whom every one loved and honored; "but somehow I never took that to mean any thing to any one but the disciples to whom it was said. It always seemed as though we had enough to do right here in our own Church and our own town. Then, too, it had a 'flavor' of a 'woman's rights' movement for ladies to make a specialty of this. Our ministers have once or twice spoken rather lightly of the work of the women in this foreign missionary field. I don't see why they *should*, for I never knew one to object to the work of the women in their own Church. When I was at Kansas City last Summer the ministers were loud in the praises of the 'Pastor's Christian Union,' or something of that sort. I hope I have the word 'Christian,' in the right place—*could* it have been 'Christian Pastors?' It is a society where the minister keeps the women doing pastoral work and reporting to him. A grand thing, I dare say, only one woman



who lived near my daughter used to send her six forlorn little children out to her neighbors while she did her 'pastoral' work. I can't see why we could n't give one hour each month learning about, praying for, and giving to foreign work, doing, perhaps, less of what we call home work. Sometimes I think that what we call 'home work' amounts to very little, so few are in downright earnest in their efforts to save souls. I've been a Christian over twenty-five years, and I do n't *know* that I have led *one soul* to Christ. I do n't like the thought of a starless crown. But see what is being done in heathen lands. Only the other day I saw in one corner of our religious paper an account of what two missionary ladies were doing somewhere in Asia. They had, under their care, about thirty women and children, and at the beginning of the year only one of those women was a Christian—at the close, all were Christians but five. We have two hundred Church members, and from the hundreds of the unconverted around us, we have, perhaps, helped a dozen to come to the Savior, most of them children from the Sabbath-school—from classes taught by women. I wish, Mrs. Fairchild, we *could* have a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society here. I'm willing to do what I can. What can we do, and how shall we organize?"

Mrs. Fairchild did not reply, hoping others



would speak on the subject; and, after a few minutes of silence, Mrs. Howard, an earnest, Christian woman, who had trained three sons to a noble manhood, one of whom was preaching the Gospel, and the others doing grand work in the world for the Master, said, in gentle tones, "This work of saving souls in foreign lands has often been a burden on my heart. I have sometimes wondered if our very objections to the work could not, if we took them on our knees to God, be wrought into arguments for doing this very thing. My son sends me, sometimes, a copy of *The Heathen Woman's Friend*, and I saw in one an account of the manner in which the converts in heathen lands act after they have found Jesus. You know that here, in our own Churches, when souls are converted, we have to brace them from behind, stand close to their sides to strengthen, haul them with ropes hung with flowers, from the front, for several years, and hardly save them at that. We must praise, flatter, and coax; give them places of trust in the Church and Sabbath-school; and then pray that God will take them when there is a revival in February, so that they may enter heaven at last. You know that all our shows, entertainments, exhibitions, festivals, socials, and such things, are to amuse, entertain, and keep our young converts. But in foreign lands the converts



from heathenism are fired with the news, and speak forth the praises of Jesus to every one they meet. In this last paper which Walter sent me, was a letter from a missionary who is in India, and she said that the first day she was there she saw a poor woman throw her child into the Ganges and a hungry shark come and take it. She in some way got the woman under her influence, and when, after a while, she understood about Jesus, she cried out, 'O, why did not some one tell me this before I gave my boy to the river! O, I felt then that the fruit of my body was not enough for the sins of my soul. This news of a Savior is too good to keep! I want every one to hear it. *This* is a religion which satisfies my soul. I must go back to my people and tell this story.'

"'But you'll be persecuted, you'll be beaten, starved—*killed*.'

"'I care not,' she replied, 'I have a husband, I have a mother, I have sisters. I came here to get peace. I drowned my boy to appease my god. O, my boy! My beautiful, perfect boy! But I have found Jesus. I must go and carry the glad news.' And this heathen woman had been the means of founding a Church, where were now two hundred members, and from them had gone out twenty native teachers. These teachers are somewhat educated, and could get, in government



employ, five or six times the salary they receive as teachers, but who so love their work that they are willing to suffer with hunger or thirst if they can only tell of a risen Redeemer. They often go with only one meal a day; they sleep anywhere, and endure gladly all sorts of trials for Christ's sake. The writer said that these native preachers say it is easy to teach and preach five and six times a day, where thousands of converts are praying, 'God bless our preachers. Keep the fever off them. Help them to tell all our people about the blessed Jesus. God help our people to hear the good news.'

"This lady, who was writing, said that she had often heard her husband say that he wished he could divide himself into five or six parts, and preach in different places at the same time, so great is the need and the desire for more preachers. 'It is our *joy*,' she says, 'to spend *every thing* for Jesus, who has done so much for us.' In the ten years they have been there, where at first were forty-five Christians, are now six thousand eight hundred and over (the exact number I have forgotten). How much has our Church grown during the last ten years? I am decidedly in favor of our working all we can for the conversion of the heathen. It cost as much to redeem their souls as it did our souls. I wish we could have a society,



and could meet once a month and talk over this thing, and pray over it, and give for it; could 'cast up the highway, and gather out the stones,' so that the missionary could do even better work than he is now doing; and, best of all, that in getting interested in this work for God, we can learn to love it."

"I, too," said Mrs. Powers, "want to help 'gather out the stones.' The Gospel has done so much for us women, we are bound, in duty, to work on this highway to pay our tax. Here we are, all traveling along to glory, singing,

" 'We're marching through Immanuel's ground,  
To fairer worlds on high,'

never changing the hymn to,

" 'The vale must rise, the mountain fall,  
Crooked be straight, and rugged plain.'"

"If we want our King to go on throughout the earth from conquering to conquest, we must help get the way ready for him. I do believe we are only half doing duty. I hope the Lord will forgive us the past; and let us, sisters, try and think of something besides '*our*' and '*my*;' something besides '*our* town,' '*our* church,' and '*my* soul.'"

"I heard a lady say, who was a member of the Woman's Board of Missions of the Congregational Church, that we, as women, were paid over and



over again for all we did in this work by the rich inward experience we gain. And I have noticed," said Mrs. Vail, a lady to whom all looked with confidence and respect, "that God seems to give a peculiar blessing to the Christian women who are working in the cause of foreign missions; that the woman who, in her sympathy and prayers, takes in the women (missionary and heathen) in other lands, finds she has invested in a wonderful mine of love and grace. And I believe that in *shutting out* missions we shut out Christ, not only from the heathen, but from our own souls. We are paid as individuals and as nations for all that we do for less favored lands than ours. I saw in a paper the other day, that England had been doubly paid for all that she had done for Australia by the profit on some one article of export—pitchforks, I think. Her effort for the evangelization of Australia had enriched England in many ways. Not only manufactures and commerce, but science has also received great impulse from missions. There is something for us women to do besides look at our own four walls, and the horizon that shuts us in. And one of the most delightful thoughts of to-day is, that *we* are not the only women in the world who are desiring to reach out a helping hand. Everywhere, in every Church, every town, and every land, the field is ready for the harvest.



In our effort to help the heathen women, we help ourselves, and we help other women everywhere. There is a wonderful and beautiful tie that binds women together, in all lands and in all ages, and if we want to sing ‘*Blest* be the tie,’ we must answer our own prayers, as far as we can, by trying to make it a ‘blessed tie.’ I don’t know as I am surprised—yet it does seem *rather* strange—that so many of us ladies have been interested in mission work, and never have spoken of it before. I suppose a volcano is some time getting ready to break forth.”

“I was just thinking, Mrs. Vail, that I *was* surprised at the fact of our being interested in a subject of which we had never spoken,” said Mrs. Shattuck, another lady of intelligence and refinement, “and yet, when I tell you of what I have done you will smile to think I could think others would be apt to speak of all that was in mind or heart. I have been thinking for some time about missions, and a few months ago sent one dollar and a half to a Mrs. Nind, of Minnesota, whose name I saw in some *Advocate* in connection with missionary work, and have made myself a sort of member at large of the Woman’s Society, but get the missionary paper, *The Heathen Woman’s Friend*, right in my own home. I would not be without the paper for any thing you could offer of several



times its cost. The children are interested in it. Edward says it is the best of its kind he ever saw—and we take the best from other Churches—and since I began to read it a new world has opened up to me. I look back upon myself as I was before I read the paper, with something of the same sort of pity we people beyond the Mississippi look upon a New Englander who is wise in his own conceit, yet never went beyond his own country. In my last paper was a report of the anniversary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, which was held in Boston, and the amounts raised and work done by women is marvelous. The women in our Church have raised over \$68,000.00. There are over fifty thousand ladies who are members of the societies, and they have sent out over thirty lady missionaries, besides supporting many Bible women—readers—about one hundred and fifty, I think, in different places in different lands. The lady missionaries are working in schools—have about one hundred and forty—orphanages, hospitals, and as physicians. I think we are too intelligent a class of ladies here in Xenia to be left out of this great work. I think that we are too anxious to help the cause of our Master to stand with folded hands. These women missionaries are doing the work which men *can not* do. No man can reach the heathen women. Only women *can* do this



work. I am *sure* we ladies are ready to help other ladies do this work of uplifting our own sex in all the world. Because this work *can not* be done by men, is, of itself, argument sufficient to show that the Lord intended we should do it; you see, if we fail, the work will not be done at all. There are not only *thousands* of these women to be reached, but *millions*. It is said that there are 800,000,000 souls in heathenism; isn't it safe to say that one-half, or about one-half, are women; and these women will be the mothers of *all* the heathen of the next generation. And it is *such* slow work at the very best to reach all these poor creatures. I saw in my paper the other day, an account of one day's work in the life of one of our missionary ladies. She started out in the morning by riding two miles to the home of a rich banker, where were three women, one his wife, who was learning to read. The woman read her lesson, and it was followed by a little talk. A boy of six came in, dressed like a girl, and called his mother by another name, and gave the terms of endearment to his aunt. The mother of the boy had lost one child, and it was supposed that some one had cast an evil eye upon the one who had died. In her great love for her child, the mother had dressed her boy like a girl, that the evil spirits might be deceived, and for the same reason does not appear



to notice him, lest he'll die. The missionary lady told these women about God, who was their God; about Christ, who died for them as he did for us. One woman seemed interested, and, as she left them, she went on her way praying—so glad that she could pray.

“The next house she could not enter, for a new baby had come, and for three days the mother not only does without food, but can see no one. In the third house she found several women. They had the walls covered with pictures of their gods, and the images in every possible niche. They were all in new garments, as they had just passed the six months of mourning for a relative, and had not changed during that whole time the garments they had been wearing. The missionary says that if she had been one of those missionary women we find only in books, she could have opened her Bible to just the right place and read words fitted for their case. But all these women and several children were seized with a great desire to know about her watch, chain, clothes, and glasses, and as she was a guest in their house, she was for a time silent on the subject nearest her heart. At last she sang a hymn, and then explained it and talked with them about Jesus. At the next place, dirty, foul, full of smells, and naked children, she began to sing, and about fifty children and women



gathered about her. They seemed interested in her talk, but, alas! for human plans, some child stole a cake and a deafening uproar was raised. She rose to depart, but a few of the women tried to keep her, but she told them that the next time she came they must be more quiet; and this woman went on, day after day, all day long like this. In this very province of India, where this woman lives, are over twenty millions of women and girls to be taught, and no man is allowed to look upon the face of a heathen woman. Their case seems so deplorable. Among these women, about one-sixth are widows, which means there an outcast, a slave, a thing hated and despised. Many of the widows are children, sad, forlorn, hopeless; not a thing to look forward to with pleasure. About five thousand of them are under nine years of age—about like my Ellen—and twenty-three thousand are under fourteen. Poor children. We know so little about what is going on under our feet, and what is worse, we care so little. I propose,” added Mrs. Shattuck after a minute’s pause, “I propose that we organize a society. As our pastor is responsible for all Church work, I propose that we talk this matter over with him, and get him to explain to the people our purpose, plans, and the relation our society holds to the general missionary society. We will have our secretary



appointed for the meeting, ladies ready to go through the congregation and get the names of those who would like to join, and who would like our paper. We have no other missionary paper in the Church, and it ought to have a large circulation. We can have a nominating committee appointed, officers elected, and our first meeting called, all in one Sunday evening, and, to my mind, it will be the best Sunday evening's work ever done in our Church. Let us pray over this." And all present at that Dorcas Society fell on their knees.

The missionary society was organized. Of all the good done by that society we shall never know until we stand before the throne of God. Hundreds of dollars have been sent to aid in the keeping missionary women in the field. A little famine orphan has been taken and is being educated in India. There are members of the society who are looking forward to the time when they can individually care for orphan children taken from heathenism. Life members have been made, and for this cause women are learning to delight in sacrifice and self-denial. Of the growth, intellectually and spiritually, of these ladies, we have no way to measure.

The women most interested in this foreign work are the women who work most effectually in the



Church where they belong. They care for the sick, for the poor, for the sad and lonely; they call on strangers; they work in the Sabbath-school; they are interested in the public charities of the town where they live. They labor with a broad comprehension of the work to be done; a knowledge—the outgrowth of the interest and zeal created by their work in the Woman's Foreign Missionary cause.



X.

Born to Blush Unseen.

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**N**OT long ago we heard from the pulpit a thought something like this: "I do not believe in the theory that we were 'born to blush unseen.' Fit yourselves for something worth while in life, and the world will recognize your worthiness."

We are not in the habit of taking the belief of the minister or the dose of the physician without giving each due thought, let our confidence in pastor or doctor be ever so great. This thought, given by this well-beloved pastor, of fitting one's self for one's sphere, we have turned over and over in our mind, and we like it, and believe that only those who are really prepared for, and are honestly doing their genuine life-work, find any real rest in this world. But that the fitting yourself for your allotted work always wins the appreciation of mortals—the approbation of the world—we are inclined to doubt. And if it does, what does it avail?

Are we any better because our worth is recog-



nized? Does it make us better to strive to have justice done us by our fellow mortals? In what way does the constant thinking of one's self, and the having a constant anxiety to know how one looks in the eyes of the world, ennoble us—lift us intellectually or spiritually? The having such a care or thought is the very thing we have for years been trying not to have.

God has called us to be his soldiers, and our great Captain will look out for our rations, clothes, honors, and rewards. This is his especial care, and with his love and wisdom we know that “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Our only care should be that we go forward in the march; that we obey orders, and do the duties given us; and, really, this is the only thing in our power, as good soldiers, to do.

A true soldier does not fret because there is danger that his officers will not lead him aright; because he fears that the one in command will not appreciate and reward him for doing his duty; because he fears the newspapers will not mention his name and praise him; because his fellow-soldiers do not fall before him and cry, “Great is Diana.” He only thinks of self in one way—am I true to God and duty? With the Christian soldier the only thought should be, am I doing all that I can, spiritually and intellectually, in my effort to take



the "steps up to heaven," and in helping my neighbor up the same golden stairway? Am I doing this solely for God's glory, and the good it may do immortal souls? Am I doing my life-work with the care only of God's approbation at last? If this is not the motive power, if we are doing more than this, there is danger in the saving of one's life to "lose it."

Because the world applauds is no certainty that we are doing our work well. We heard a quaint brother say, not long ago, "We are praying and praying that the Lord 'will roll the chariot of salvation this way,' and he has. It is right here in our midst, and has been this ten years, and every member of the Church who is not asleep *in* the chariot, is tinkering it up. It looks too old-fashioned for some, and they want more style; some have been trying to put on labor-saving attachments; and some have no faith in its worth, and want the whole chariot remodeled. Our ministers are doing all they can to draw the people to look at the chariot, but somehow even they seem to forget that it is an useless thing unless it moves on. And it ought to move twelve months in the year. This beating of drums in the winter season, and crying with a loud voice, 'Lord!' 'Lord!' is getting to be an old story with the fly sinners, and they 'walk into our parlor' with wary steps. We



are making altogether too much noise—creating too much sensation to please Him who sometimes comes with the ‘still small voice.’”

What is true of Churches is true of individuals. When we are about to do a good act, or have done a great one, we do not need to “beat the drums.” If we are any thing more than a stalk or leaf—if we are a flower, and the fragrance goes off on the desert air, it is not lost because no one passes by just then to tell us of the good it has done. We are not all of God’s universe. God never created in vain.

“In a valley, centuries ago,  
Grew a fern-leaf, green and slender,  
Veining delicate, and fibers tender,  
Waving when the wind crept down so low.  
But no foot of man ere came that way ;  
Earth was young, and keeping holiday.

Useless ? Lost ? There came a thoughtful man  
Searching Nature’s secrets, far and deep ;  
From a fissure in a rocky steep  
He withdrew a stone, o’er which there ran  
Fairy pencilings, a quaint design ;  
Leafage, veining, fibers clear and fine ;  
And the fern’s life lay in every line !  
So, I think, God hides some souls away,  
Sweetly to surprise us the last day.”

The “how” and the “why” of the hidden things do not belong to us. It may be that at



the last day God will "surprise" us with the hidden beauty and fragrance of the lives we have known here, it may be not—what matters it?

How beautifully Schiller answers the question of our trouble, lest life shall pass in silence,

"And if it do  
And never prompt the bray of noisy brass,  
What needs't thou rue?"

"The ocean deeps are mute;  
The shallows roar;  
Worth is the ocean—Fame is but the bruit  
Along the shore."

Who has not learned that if we trouble ourselves here, day by day, about the recognition of our worth, about things which are outside of ourselves and our power, we have neither peace with God, self, nor our fellow-man?

We will not ask for recognition, but for peace; for that peace which brings *true* rest; not what the world calls rest. It is not laying aside the oars and floating onward; not that which we vainly imagine comes with fame or wealth; not that which comes with a heart cold and indifferent to others and the needs of the Church and the world, but for that peace of God which passeth understanding. That peace which comes as we struggle on through storm and sunshine, through darkness and light, through censure, blame, or praise, while



toiling for God, while sowing that others may reap. How long before riches, fame, or *recognition of our worth* will bring this peace? How long?

How inexpressible is this peace, this rest which comes to all hearts who simply “do the will of the Father!”


To every heart which knows and recognizes its own sincerity—and knows of the secret greenness hidden, perhaps, beneath the snow over which passes the tempests, the winds, and the Winter night—and knows that One sees this, the approval of that One will bring the peace, aye, even the joy, which all the world can *never* give, and what is yet more blessed, all the world can not take away..



## XI.

### Adeline's Christmas Gift.

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“ELL, father,” said Mrs. Luther, addressing her husband, “what shall we do about the presents for Christmas this year? To be sure, the children are too old to hang their stockings, but somehow, I do n’t like to break up the custom of making presents, and having the day like other days. What is the state of the finances?” and the lady laid down the red and white stocking that was nearly ready for some little foot, and looked at the kind face opposite the library table.

“ ‘The state of the finances,’ my good lady, is in rather a depressed condition, but I suppose I can let you have a quarter if twenty cents will not do,” and Mr. Luther smiled over his little joke. “What were you thinking about getting for the children? ‘The children,’ yes, they will always be ‘children’ to us, but there is Martin, six feet in his stockings, and more business in his head than in all the young men on State Street. Imogene is actually a woman; gentle and lady-like,



and looks as you did at her age," and the old gentleman cast a fond look at the wrinkled face and gray hairs of his fellow-voyager down life's rough stream. "I was thinking," he continued in a musing strain, "that young Stewart comes here quite often of late, and Adeline seems very much pleased to meet him. Am I right, mother?"

"You are as near right as usual," said the more observing parent, in a slightly sarcastic tone, paying for the joke of a few minutes before. "She seems glad to see him, but after he has been in the house a little while she usually becomes interested in something else, and it becomes Imogene's duty to entertain him. I asked her how it happened, and she said that, 'mission schools and paupers are more to Imogene's taste than mine.' Mr. Stewart is a good young man."

"Good as gold, but too conscientious to rise in life," said the more worldly-minded parent.

Just then a door opened and a lad about twelve years old came in for a book, and went back to his own room without speaking. When the door closed, Mr. Luther said, in a sad tone, "Harvey's loss of voice and his deafness is the greatest trouble we have ever experienced. I do n't know what the boy would do if it were not for Elizabeth. She is his shadow and his comforter."

"Not the *greatest* sorrow, my dear; you forget



Henry," and the mother put her hand against her heart, that for twenty years had throbbed with a dull pain when came the thought of her first-born son, who died just as he was learning to lisp their names and delight them with all his sweet baby ways. "Harvey's misfortune is sad, but we have our boy, who, with that exception, is all that we could ask as a son. He is very happy with his books and pets, and, to Elizabeth, he takes delight in expressing his thoughts. She says that he tells as delightful stories as she finds in her books and magazines. It is coming near the close of the year, and we must decide upon what periodicals to take next year. But, first, what about Christmas?"

"What do you want, wife? Times are not very good, but I have done tolerably well, considering the state which the country is in. I have been considering the question of making a present to Martin of a share of my business, and taking him into the firm the first of January. My other boy, I think, will be happy as a king with, perhaps, Bohn's Library, as he expressed a great desire to own the books which he came across somewhere one day not long ago. Good taste, that, for a boy of twelve. You know what the girls want better than I do."

"Besides the things which I have made them, I hardly know what to get. Books would satisfy



Elizabeth as fully as they do Harvey. Imogene asked me, the other day, if I would be willing to give her the money which I intended to spend for her present, instead of purchasing her any thing. The girls were talking about a Christmas tree for the mission school, and I judge there is where she would expend her money. After Adeline came home from school, last June, she said we greatly needed a new piano, but has not said any thing about it of late—since you sustained that loss by Van Elburg. I priced the pianos last week, and I find that what I want will cost about nine hundred dollars, perhaps a little less,” and Mrs. Luther ceased speaking as the elder daughters came in from a lecture, where they had been during the evening.

Before separating for the night, Mr. Luther said to his daughter, “Your mother says that Imogene had rather have money than a Christmas present, and I would like to know if Miss Adeline is as avaricious. What does she say?”

With a profound courtesy, and a little laugh, Adeline replied, “Thanks to your liberality, my dear papa, my grasping spirit has been overcome. My quarterly allowance is ample for all my wants, charity and all.”

“Your *charity* ends where it begins,” said the elder sister, in low, even tones. “Only last Sabbath you refused to teach my class in Sabbath-



school, and also refused a dollar to help swell the amount, so that the class could get the banner this month."

Adeline was leaving the room without replying, when her father stopped her by saying, "I am sorry to hear that of my daughter. I knew that you were not particularly interested in mission work, and took but little interest in our own Church work, but I did not suppose that you would refuse a dollar to the Sabbath-school."

Adeline's cheeks flushed, and after a minute's struggle with self, she replied, "I am willing, papa, to give to the Sabbath-school, but not from wrong motives. I know that I am not as earnest a Christian as I ought to be, but I am *trying* to do what I see is right. But for Christmas, *I* do not need money, as I have not spent my quarter's allowance yet; the cloak I had last Winter will do very well this season, and my furs also. I do not ask for any money or for any gift, except your love and blessing," and her eyes filled with tears as she bid her parents good-night.

The two elder sisters in Mr. Luther's family were unlike in almost every respect. Imogene was at heart selfish and egotistical, anxious to gain the good will of every one, rather domineering, and very officious. If she did a good deed, all her world was aware of it. Adeline was frank and



generous, with that diffidence which made her hide her best and deepest feelings. If there was any side to her life which was not perfect, she was sure to show that to the world. She was naturally impulsive and quick-tempered, while Imogene was cool and calculating, always having her sister at an advantage.

Of the younger it could be said, in overcoming and in doing, "she hath done what she could," while Imogene never thought of the hidden life, if her outward deportment was correct. The father never quite understood the frank Adeline, as he never quite understood her mother, whom she so much resembled.

When Adeline reached her own room, after leaving the library, she bowed in her accustomed place with a sob and a whisper, "O, Savior, help me; I am weak." The prayer reached the ear of Him who is always listening for the cry of the needy, and he gave peace and the assurance of help in time of need.

Her room was shared by her little sister, as Imogene could not be disturbed in her devotional exercises to care for Elizabeth.

We are privileged to enter with Imogene into her room. She smoothed her hair before her glass, drew her writing desk near the register, and opened her diary. Before she wrote she leaned her head



upon her hand, and thought of what she had done during the day. At last, with a satisfied air, she made the record. From her book-case she took "Faith," and read a chapter. She read two chapters in her Bible (which she was reading through for the fourth time), and her prayer, which was uttered in low, reverential tones, was a model of elocution and rhetoric.

The next day Mrs. Luther spoke to Adeline concerning the subject discussed by herself and husband in regard to the purchase of a piano, saying, "Your father thought that I had better mention it to you, for perhaps you could better suit yourself in the selection, after testing their qualities, than could we."

The girl threw her arms around her mother's neck, and danced her mother around the room with the delight of a girl of eight, instead of eighteen, exclaiming, "You dear, darling old precious mamma; how could you think of any thing so charming? I did not complain, because I thought that father could not quite afford a new piano. But I had almost begun to hate music, the keys rattled so horribly, and it is dreadfully out of order. In playing the other evening for Mrs. Humphrey, I had to strike one key with the force of a blacksmith in order to make it sound at all, and I was afraid she would think that I had the St. Vitus



dance. O, you darling mother, I will enchant you all with my music!"

That evening *she* recorded in her diary. She recorded her pleasure felt in the offer of the Christmas gift; expressed her gratitude to Him who put this pleasant thought into her parents' hearts; then, her unworthiness of so many blessings, and her anxiety to render unto him who gave her life and all its gifts. Such innumerable blessings for her, while others were needing the ordinary comforts of life. As she wrote on, she at last mentioned Mary Wentworth's name, and she recorded the sorrow she felt for her friend, who had sustained the loss of a lovely home, and the greater loss of a loving father.

After recording these things, she leaned her face upon her book for a long time; she arose and walked back and forth across her room time and again. At last we find her in a place familiar to her—the mercy-seat. The broken, whispered sentences are: "Help me to become like my Savior—deny self; *all* is *thine*; this is only a little thing; thy will; *thy* glory; *not* my pleasure; more than any thing else, to become like thee, O Christ! Help, *help*, O Lord! Resign myself—forsake self; make me a holy, humble disciple of thine, that I may be ever ready and anxious to do thy will. For Jesus' sake I would bear the cross." Then



came the victory. "Thanks be unto thee; rejoice in *thy* name. Thou art my strong deliverer; the joy unspeakable. I do praise thee, O Lord. Thou art so good to me, poor me."

It was no easy task which this girl had assigned herself. It was a heavy cross she had taken, but she was learning that Jesus always carries the heaviest end of the cross.

The next day she said to her mother, "I, too, have decided that I had rather have money than a new piano."

"What is that I hear?" said her mother, smiling and opening her eyes in astonishment.

"Well, mamma dear, I might as well tell you all about it, because I do think that you ought to know. Shall I plunge right in? You remember when Mr. Wentworth failed two years ago?"

"Yes, I remember, child. Your father thought that Mr. Wentworth was a very honorable man. They gave up all their property and went into the country, or out West, or off somewhere. But what has that to do with your new piano?"

"Just you wait patiently, *ma chere*. You know when I was at Wilbraham that Mary Wentworth was my room-mate the first year. I never told you how much I owed to her the comfort and happiness of that first year. You know I joined the Church that year—'t was through her influence—



she's a saint. She left when her father failed, and has only occasionally written me. When I graduated last Spring she wrote me the *grandest* letter. O, mother, she is *such* a noble girl. After I came home I met her on the street, and found that after her father died the family came back here, and now she has come and is supporting them by teaching. I have been at their home away out on Mulberry Street ever so many times. Mrs. Wentworth is in quite ill health, but she is a sweet woman. There are two children, one a girl about fourteen, who has had to leave school on account of ill health, and the doctors say 'consumption' unless she can go to Florida this Winter and not return to New England until May. Mary had been hoping that in a year or two Evangeline would be able to teach, as she is a remarkably fine scholar, and the burden would be less for two. But now—do n't you see, mother? Of course, Evangeline must go to Florida, if it takes half of my piano money, or *all* of it. Please do not think that I do n't appreciate your loving, thoughtfulness, but how *can* I do any thing else? And I am so glad I can. O, mother, it is so nice to have money, if it is only a little."

"Why have you not told me about them before this?" inquired Mrs. Luther.

"I did n't want to trouble them or you. I



knew that you had more than you ought to do in looking after your own poor, and all the other good things you are always doing. Imogene had her 'mission.' Besides those that I help are not really 'poor folks' of your sort. I seem to have been created for the exact purpose of finding out the troubles and cares and burdens of people of our own sort, who are just like us, only they have n't money. Every body has a work to do, and I could n't do your or Imogene's, and sometimes I fancy that Imogene could n't do mine. Imogene can say such comforting things to people in trouble, but all I can do is to sit right down and cry with them. I feel ashamed of myself, but I can't help it, and their troubles lie on my heart so heavy I can't sleep, but I do n't know what to do for them when 't is n't money they want. That is the kind I turn over to you or Imogene."

"Whom else have you found in circumstances like the Wentworths?" asked her mother, thoughtfully.

Adeline looked at her and thought her serious face showed displeasure with what she had done, and she exclaimed hastily ; "Do n't be vexed with me, mother. Father gave me the one hundred dollars each quarter, and I did not need it quite all for clothes, at least I could get along with seventy-five dollars, and sometimes less, as school-girls



do n't need to dress like ladies in society. I asked father if he cared what I did with my allowance, and he said, 'no, so long as I did not buy candy and spoil my teeth.' I paid Evangeline's car-fare and bought boots and flannels for her, and some things for her mother when I thought they would n't mind; and there are three or four other families where I go and help in the same sort of a way. I got acquainted with the girls at Church, and then went to their homes. You knew often when I went, and the girls have been here. In each of the families the husband and father is dead, and, mother, it is so hard for a woman to make a living for her family, and keep them all real comfortable. Of course, you know all these things, but I am only beginning to learn them for my very own self. I have done so little, mother, I thought you would n't care. I would n't spend a *great* amount, even for charity, without telling you."

"O, my daughter," and the tears ran down the lady's face; "my dear girl, you make me happier than if I had just gained the knowledge that I had fallen heir to an estate of a million."

With the approval and aid of her parents, Adeline had the pleasure that Winter, years and years ago, of seeing Evangeline and her mother start for the land of perpetual youth. Both returned in the early Summer time with health regained. Evan-



geline became a successful teacher, and was a great help and comfort to her family, and is now the wife of a prominent minister in a Southern State, doing good and earnest work for her Master.

In going the "Steps up to Heaven," it sometimes takes years to mount one. Adeline by that one act of self-denial drew very near to her Savior, so that she learned then to put her hand in his, and all the years since he has led her onward, giving a peace and a joy that is more to her than could be any earthly gift or reward. The love which brings such a joy need never grow dim, need never burn less brightly, need never flicker or waver, but will glow with a steadier light until quenched by the river of death, only to burst forth with eternal glory in the city not made with hands, but eternal—in the New Jerusalem.



## XII.

### Our Daughters.

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“**H**E is only a country fellow, and I am ashamed to go with him,” said a girl a long time ago, when speaking to her mother of a young man who had invited her to go to a fashionable entertainment.

“Why ashamed?” asked her mother.

“His coat is old-fashioned, his hands are tanned, and all the girls in our set laugh at him,” replied Helen, a feeling of scorn for herself creeping into her heart at this lack of independence and discovery of foolish pride.

The mother was silent, and after a few minutes Helen said, laughingly, “I suppose you are wondering whether I am your daughter or Florabelle Fitz Clair de Lune. I know, mother, what you would say, ‘Hugh Ruggles is well educated, good, and sensible.’ Granted. To that I will add, I like him real well, and he seems to like me, but the girls ask if his ‘coat was ordered from Paris?’ ‘Who imported his gloves?’ ‘Was his hat left



over from before the flood?" and, "Who is his barber?" and I am just foolish enough to let them make me uncomfortable."

"Perhaps my daughter thinks Augustus Asterbilt a more desirable escort," replied her mother. "*His* hands are white, and very soft ('so is his head,' muttered Helen); his coat is of the latest style; his manners are what you girls call 'beautiful,' he can pick up your handkerchief or your glove with the grace of a lady. Is he in every way a more agreeable companion, my daughter?"

"As simply an escort he may be more desirable than Hugh," Helen answered, "but as an acquaintance, as a friend, Hugh is greatly to be preferred. All that Mr. Asterbilt can talk about is his horses, the latest party, or the color of his neck-tie. I asked him once if he ever read any thing, and he said, 'Aw, yes; read every one of Mrs. Southworth's books; very fine; aw, very fine; first rate books.' I asked him what was in them, and he said, 'Aw, lovely things; such scenery, and narrow escapes! Aw, such lovely girls; and, aw, they always found the—the—just—aw! just the right lover.' Oh, mother!" and Helen's tones were full of contempt and disgust. After a minute she added, "But, after all, mother, one is so satisfied when in his carriage. It is the nicest one in the city. His horses are beauties. His gloves



are faultless. He is good—no, he is *pretty*, not good-looking. His home would be—why, mother, it would be *just* lovely; and to tell you the plain truth”—and the girl turned her blushing face from her mother toward the window, and busied herself pulling the dead leaves from her plants—“I am in a strait ’twixt two. I am quite sure that I must decide soon whether I am willing to go through life with one of these two friends, and I fear that I do not know my own mind.”

We know, but we are not going to tell, which of these two young men Helen chose for a life companion. The last time we saw Augustus Asterbilt, he was sitting on the piazza of his new home, smoking a cigar and reading a sporting journal. He is always found at the horse-races, at the theater and opera; his friends are men whose tastes are like his own, but most of them with less money than himself. His mornings he sleeps through; his afternoons he spends with boon companions behind his fast horses; and his Sundays he spends the same as he does his week-days, though they have a costly pew in an elegant church.

Hugh Ruggles has a well-tilled farm, which he faithfully superintends. He has improved his leisure hours in adding stores of wisdom to a well-cultivated mind, and is respected by every one in the community where he lives, and is beginning



to be quoted as authority on many a subject in the State where is his home. The Church acknowledges him as a pillar, and his pastor knows that he can lean on him, and the support will not crumble.

We wonder how many girls there are who would decide as Helen decided.

So often have we heard girls say, "But *I* will never marry a poor man." Not long ago one young lady made a remark like that, and a young friend replied, "Neither will I, and work like a slave on a plantation." "I will not marry a farmer," added a farmer's daughter, "and cultivate the kitchen-garden, milk the cows, make butter, bring in wood, do the work for the farmhands, all the cooking, washing, ironing, and sewing for a large family; and, for reward for my services, be allowed to ride into town in a farm-wagon once in a while; allowed to look into the stores, and perhaps buy such things as *must* be purchased, if a man don't know how to buy those very things. *I* think the farmers in our State are about like people in semi-civilized countries, where they harness the wife with an ox, to plow."

With many of our daughters it seems to be the *ideal* life to live without any household duties. Life, to them, is made up of one long voyage in a beautiful ship, forever sailing on pacific seas; the one companion has "beautiful" eyes, "pearly"



teeth, charming manners, and plenty of gold; the air is filled with thrilling music and exquisite fragrance; the moon constantly shines; the winds are balmy, and they are wafted on until—well, this goes on forever; they never think of the end.

There are many sensible girls in the world, but there are a multitude of young ladies, daughters of sensible mothers, whose views of life are all wrong.

We heard, only yesterday, one of the sensible, intelligent young ladies whom we know, say, “I suppose when I marry I shall be a poor man’s wife, and shall have to economize. Thank fortune, or I might more truly say, thanks to my mother, I know how, and I don’t dislike it. My greatest ambition is to be a good home-keeper, just like my mother. Only a few days ago mamma told father something which she had heard greatly to his credit, and father said—and he looked unutterable things toward mamma when he spoke—‘I don’t know what man could n’t succeed in life that had you for a helper.’ Do you know, I’d rather my husband—if I ever have one—would say that to me, when we’ve been married twenty years, than to cover me with diamonds. And mamma’s face flushed, and the tears came to her eyes, and she looked so happy. I know that with all my painting, and my music, and botany, and all these things that are so much to me, it don’t *look* as



though I should care to be a home-keeper, but I *can* be the nicest kind of a home-keeper and love these things too."

We need not discuss woman's rights or woman's wrongs. At the creation God gave us women our position, and I have yet to learn of any new revelation on this subject from him. We may each one of us thank God that we are a woman, and we will try to be one of the highest type—a womanly woman. The natural place for us is as man's help-mate, and it seems as though there must be some error in a girl's education if she dislikes household cares and home duties. When we were little, we naturally delighted in caring for our dolls, having our tea-set, beds for the dolls, and enjoyed even the wash-tub, dust-pan, and churn. We never saw a little boy enjoy such things. He always carries the doll with the feet up. He uses the tub to mix paint in, the churn for a cage for little mice, and with the dasher and the dust-pan invents a cymbal that will make his mother long for a bit of cotton for her ears.

We were created for the work assigned us, and if, in some unnatural way we escape these duties, we become restless, unhappy creatures, with no legitimate resting-place for the sole of the foot. Happiness always comes with faithful performance of duty. But it seems as though we, as mothers,



think too much about "happiness." We are too often impressing upon the minds of our children that we are to be looking for this result of our life-work, when really we have nothing to do with it. We are simply to do our duty, and to teach our children this, leaving results with Him to whom they belong.

There is many a mother who thinks that though she, and though other girls had, and will have, to go up life's hill step by step, that for *her* daughters there will be some royal road, some way, a sort of magic steam-elevator, where they can sit, with folded hands and closed eyes, until the height is gained. Do they ever think that, if such a way were possible, the loss of the satisfaction, as each step upward is gained, is actually greater than the gain of the whole elevation without corresponding effort to reach the height? If there could be any royal way to the height desired, only the results would be obtained, and the entire loss of the sense and power of effort, which are the only things which count for character, would leave the person on the height of no more worth than a senseless stick or stone. There are such people in the world, but they are nonentities; the world would be just as well off without them. Instead of thinking of, or desiring, a life of ease and luxury for our children, let us educate them so that every one who



comes under their influence shall be uplifted by them spiritually and intellectually. In giving them their intellectual training, the moral must not be forgotten. Teach them in such a manner that all they gain of knowledge shall be transmuted into power. In the moral realm it is only prolonged and concentrated effort that makes one really great, and the same is true of the intellectual life.

With all the getting which our daughters seek, not one should leave out the learning how to make the home-life pleasant. This is never learned by the daughter who sits in the parlor while the mother turns herself into a servant, that the girl need never soil her hands with kitchen work. If girls are early taught that they have duties in the home, the tasks are soon readily and cheerfully performed.

Women find more pleasure in self-sacrifice than in any other one thing. If the Savior had been a woman, such a life as his would have been much less impressive. Noble love assists readily. It does not turn its back to difficulties at the outset. And all the difficulties of life God has kindly arranged so that, if we do the first task, the second lesson can more easily be learned. Beginnings are always easy. If work was given us as a curse—which we gravely doubt—we only make it greater by kicking against the pricks. Take it quietly and



bravely. If taken in a right way it always proves to be a blessing. As the children say, "make believe" it is agreeable, and the task is a thing of pleasure.

There was a family we once knew, where boneset was the panacea for every ill. If a child complained of a headache, the bitter herb was steeped and a dose given. If the mother felt sleepy and stupid, nothing gave a wide-awake feeling like a draught of boneset. There was one child who never knew a well day, and was also one who was always in mischief at home and at school. An aunt of the child, who had no children of her own, therefore knew just how to train her sister's children, recommended a dose of boneset for that child every time she "fell from grace" at school. It became the regular beverage each night on the return from school for that poor little girl. In a few weeks boneset lost all its disagreeable taste to that child, and twenty years from that time she would as soon drink it as any nectar of the gods.

With all the disagreeable duties of life, if we accustom ourselves to do them, and determine that duty shall be pleasure, with God's help we win the battle.

The reading public sees, day after day, accounts of the "extravagance" and "ignorance" of young women, and the reason that so many young men



are going to ruin is because they can not afford to marry the girl of to-day. We have nothing to say of the extravagance of the young men, and of their unwillingness to deny themselves the foolish, expensive habits they have formed. But to the girls we would like to say, do not shun the worthy poor young man because he is poor; also do not be afraid to let him know that your best dress, which you look so well in, you turned wrong side out and upside down, and made into the fashion of the day from a picture which caught your eye. Or, that your pretty hat is made from a lace collar and a bit of silk, with a good feather you have re-curved several seasons, and this season the hat cost you only fifty cents or a dollar. Women know that the girls are not extravagant, but the young men do not dream of the thousand and one ways a girl knows how to look well dressed and have it cost but a trifle.

We have asked young ladies if the gentlemen knew how little their clothes cost. "No, indeed!" they all reply, "We make them think our things are *awful* nice." For this you get the undeserved name of being extravagant. It pays best to be frank and perfectly honest about these things, as well as in every thing else.

We love young girls so well, and are so anxious for their true happiness, that we would like to en-




dow a college, and have the wisest and most sensible women in the world for professors, to teach all the girls in our land how to dress economically and well, and how to love home-keeping.



### XIII.

## Monday and Sunday.

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HAT two days could be more unlike than Sunday and Monday? The contrast of the quiet, peaceful Sabbath rest, with the hurry and disquiet of Monday morning, seemingly never of the blessedness of the one reaching over into the purgatory of the other. Yet each of these days is used to make a clear beginning of the week. The other days we contract "the soil" and "the sin," and we use these two days for "washing" and for "repenting."

I was thinking this Monday morning of the sermon I heard yesterday, about the *perfect man*. It was said in the pulpit yesterday, that we ought to have more perfectly developed characters; and the sublime spectacle of the man who embodied all the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the courage of Daniel, with every shining grace of every particular saint in all ages, was held up for our imitation.

"Depressing?" Rather, with the mercury at



ninety-five, and no sleep the night before on account of a terrific thunder-storm and dread of a cyclone.

But what a desire I had yesterday for all the perfections of all the saints. Being particularly quick-tempered, and always anxious to see the end when I first touch the beginning, I particularly desired to be most like Moses and Job. If, by any chemical process, the quicksilver in my nature could be taken out, and putty put in, I was willing to undergo any amount of physical pain for the sake of the results which would follow such an operation.

But this Monday morning I commenced the day's work by picking up the scattered papers, magazines, and books pulled down for the Sunday reading, and dropped behind the lounge, on the chairs, or under the tables, and the desires of yesterday began to fade away.

I worked on, gathering the soiled garments from the chambers, removing slippers, left "convenient for next time," from the middle of the room, carrying the barn hat from the parlor table, the barn coat from the writing-desk, and putting in place the thousand and one things which men contrive and delight to leave in unheard of places. That sermon! What perfect men there have been since Adam was beguiled! Now, if I were a man



I might hope to become all that the pastor pictured yesterday, but as it is, I wonder how long it would take of conflict with woman's duties in life to wear off the wind-mill points in my temperament, and develop me into that delightful creature, a perfect mortal—a “well rounded character.” Judging of the improvement I have made in the past, to reach such a standard of perfection, I concluded I ought to have been contemporary with Eve and lived until the end of time.

Yesterday I was actually burdened because I was so far from any saint mentioned, and the desire was so great to be just like the one I most admired. To-day I am only amused at the absurdity of my ever holding such thoughts, and a “well rounded character,” as described in the sermon, seemed the most undesirable character in the world.

And can it be that I am unlike other mortals, because the Monday thoughts are so unlike the Sunday's aims and wishes? At any rate we shall to-day console ourself with the idea that if we to-day are worse than others, we were yesterday so much better that we shall average about like other mortals.

How easy, yesterday, it would have been to tell others of the royal road to perfect development. It would have been like mastering a grief; so easy, except for the one who has the sorrow.



But, to-day, we hardly believe that there is such a road, and if there is, we would advise every woman to shun it.

If there ever was a child trained from her earliest years to have a symmetrical character, I endured that training. The efforts to prune my wild nature, to cultivate, round off the corners, polish, tie up, bend over, train gracefully upon trellises, or twist into proper form, were really wonderful in parents, elder sisters, maiden aunts, and all the friends of the family who had no children of their own to practice upon. But all their efforts have proved in vain. If yesterday we had thought of this, their utter failure in reducing us to a dead level, and making life as humdrum to us as it is to others, we should have felt a genuine sorrow, and, perhaps, have shed a few tears. But to-day we rather exult in the thought that God did his part of the work in such a thorough manner that it could not be undone by mortal, and that we have lived to learn that all he requires of us is *not* to try to be like some one else, but graft our nature on to the true vine, and live and bear fruit in our own natural way.

The more we think about the "rounded character" of which we heard yesterday, the less we desire to be one. Why, it would be as smooth as a glass globe, and as uninteresting. It would be



as tasteless as Monday morning vegetables from a city market; no flavor of humanity about it. A sort of live automaton.

Just look at what comes nearest the development of a "well rounded character"—the proper young man or woman. I mean the *very proper* one; so unenthusiastic, and so polite. Every one with the natural perverseness of human nature, but with the natural instinct which is given from God, turns with relief to the girl tomboy, or to the fellow who has the loud, jolly laugh that comes when the heart is at peace with self and with all the world.

A life that is governed by human rules to make us "well rounded," must be unlovely and unnatural. About as much inspiration in such a character, and about as enjoyable as the parlor in a fashionable dwelling containing the "regulation" articles of furniture.

Last Fall, while in the waiting room of a depot in Providence, a woman, in charge of the room, stepped up to us, and with both hands on her hips, remarked: "Them chairs are not to be removed from the wall."

We had drawn a hard, cold, black, hair-cloth chair from the side of the room to the register, for the purpose of warming our chilled feet and fingers. We looked up in astonishment, and asked



if this was not the room furnished for the accommodation of the traveling public.

“Do n’t you see them rules?” and she pointed a dirty finger toward a placard on the opposite wall. We read :

“Do n’t move a chair.  
Do n’t stand in the door.  
Do n’t litter the floor.  
Do n’t touch the windows.  
Do n’t move the screens.  
Gentlemen not allowed in this room.  
Loud talking not allowed.  
Must use the spittoon.”

We sat and looked at the rules. We looked at the crowd of ladies in the room, some with whom we had traveled in company a long distance, and as we read that law laid down for travelers, we thought of an unwritten law that is equally absurd; the law laid down by so-called fashionable society—a law, to many a weak soul, of more consequence than the one once written on tablets of stone. We wonder how this unwritten law would look written and posted on the walls in the homes where it is observed.

We have seen the fashionable woman scoop less than half an hour at a piece of custard pie with a fork, because she dared not open her mouth to put in a spoon or the flat edge of a knife, but would not hesitate to open it continually to offer



accusations full of malice and envy against her neighbor.

Have we not seen the young woman who would not speak to the honest toiler, with soiled garments and roughened hands, but would go alone in the carriage with the wealthy debauchee, whose victims were once girls as good and pure as she?

How often have we seen the kindness offered the woman in purple and fine linen, whose garments hide an innate, coarse, and vulgar heart, while the sweet nature and fine intellect, clothed in calico and cotton, is left to suffer in silence, and bear the sorrow without this human sympathy!

Once in a great while a woman, with a hen nature, will cackle boastingly, because she has broken society's unwritten code, not dreaming that it was circumstances and not genuine goodness which made her go out of the usual routine.

"Women *are* weak," we hear some brother say, as he glances, with man's usual charity, at the follies of society.

The bank clerk sees other men lift their hats to the man who stole a fortune—so he plans to be a defaulter.

The honest salesman hears the cry, "Great is Diana!" when the merchant passes who has grown rich trading with his neighbor's necessities, and be-



comes sharp and grasping in all his transactions, and looks upon gold as the chief good of this life.

The politician grasps the hand of his wire-worker and tool, and with tears in his eyes, asks after the sick child, or the overworked wife, promising a bed of roses for them all; but stepping upon the shoulders of his man into power, forgets all the steps by which he reached his heart's desire.

They see the man desirous of fame, who, instead of deserving it by *being* truly great, keeps his name before the *Associated Press* and the newspapers, and is carried on sensation's topmost wave, allowing the masses to imagine that he is all the papers claim him to be. The young read between the lines, and cram for examination-day, strive to become men who can make a noise in the world, forgetting all about the constant pain of conscious ignorance and deceit.

All of these unwritten laws the young see ; they sink into their hearts and influence all their lives. The young lady sees this mighty code, and forgets that genuine good manners are the natural results of the fine tints and the graceful lines of beauty that are only found in a heart that knows no self, and is *real* in thought and action. She forgets that it is only the mentally strong and the thoroughly good who can be actually independent of the laws of fashionable society.



This endless pruning and warping of the young would cease, if they were taught that good breeding consists wholly "In honor preferring one another." It is folly to endeavor to make the children as near alike as marbles. It is folly to wish ourselves like some saint, or like all the saints of all the ages, and lop off one side and add to the other until all individuality is gone, and humanity is some uncouth and misshaped thing. But adjust all the strong points, strengthen the weak ones which ought to be strengthened, and make a grand character out of our very faults.

The discipline we have received from our mistakes and follies, the sorrow we have felt for wrong-doing, has made us so much of a force as we are to-day in the world. We would not contract the "soil and sin" for the sake of the result which follows the "washing and repenting," but this result makes us to-day higher than we could be if there had never been "any means to such an end."

This was the Monday's lesson from the Sunday's sermon.



#### XIV.

### A. Schoolma'am's Story.

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**I**T was one hot day in August, some time near the close of the war, that I received a letter from an old friend on Cape Cod, inviting me to spend a few months with her.

I had been teaching school for the past year, and though I had found many things in this work which were not pleasant or congenial, yet I had made up my mind that this kind of labor was to be my life-work. I had read the life of Mrs. Judson, and had thought that if I only was worthy, I should like to go to foreign lands, by and by, and teach those who had never dreamed that there was a light for them brighter than the noonday's sun. At any rate, I was sure that I was fore-ordained to spend my days as a teacher of some sort.

I had just finished the Summer term in the city of West, and was glad to bid good-bye to the hot brick school-house, and the still more furnace-like room under the French roof up the three flights



of stairs, and to cease the weary walk over the hard dusty pavement four times each day.

My room was a closet-like place, where the view from my only window was toward the roofs of neighboring houses, and upward to the sky. Nights, as I tossed upon my couch, praying for rest for my weary body and mind, I was forced to look, if I opened my eyes, upon the "milky way," which was actually creamy with the caloric vapors of the Summer heat. If I was fortunate enough to fall asleep in the midst of my sky-gazing, I would dream of green fields, and milk-maids who carried full pails upon their heads, but always tripped and fell down three flights of stairs, ruining all their prospects in life and their best green silk gowns. Or if, before slumber came, I chanced to get a glimpse of the stars in "Job's coffin," then the dreams would be of rest at last in the one narrow home provided alike for rich and poor, and where they for the first time meet on equal terms. But even here the dreams took me on and on, until in some distant world I was teaching some angel with a heavy tongue the conjugation of the auxiliary verb *être*, to be; or hearing another translate "*pro beneficio letale vulnus inflixit*," "inflicted a deadly wound for his benefit!" and after a night spent in such rest I had not gone to my daily task with as brave a heart as I ought to



have had. No wonder I was glad to get that letter.

I hunted up an old Winter garment to make into a bathing-dress, and bought a rough straw hat to tie over my ears, to keep water out of my head and sun off my face, for I fancied that most of my time would be spent on and in the water. I do n't know why I was so thoughtful about keeping the sun from my face, for it was so dark that a few shades darker would make no perceptible difference. How I had always wished that I was a blonde with golden hair and deep blue eyes; but my eyes were not only not blue, but they were neither black nor gray, but a variety of dark colors, and never looking twice alike. My hair was black, coarse, and straight as an Indian's. It was hard to own it to myself, in my younger years, but I was not handsome—had never been handsome—my own mother, even, feeling no pride in my looks from my infancy. And, more than that, I had never but once in my life been called handsome. Even the man who loves himself so much that he will flatter a lady for the sake of witnessing his power over her, had never had the presumption to call me pretty, even in the most indirect way. Once, when I was about thirteen, one of the scholars in the high school said that she heard our Latin teacher say that I was “a remark-



able looking girl"—whatever he may have intended by such an observation.

"Did he think I was pretty?" I cried, anxious for one word of praise to come into my life.

"No, I guess not," replied my candid school-mate; "how *could* he? But you always have your lessons, and I guess he rather likes you; and you know people we like always look good to us." Seeing the tears of disappointment in my eyes, in the goodness of her heart she added, "But, Helen, I think you are sort of splendid looking. If you were not such a little thing, and not always so shy and quiet, you would make a beautiful queen."

That was the nearest a "compliment" I ever received. When I went home from school that day I went directly to the dining-room glass. O, dear! But there was the back parlor glass, with its old-fashioned gilt frame, and the little boy and girl in the picture at the top; that mirror always "flattered," I'd heard my mother say. I went into the parlor, pushed open all the blinds, drew back the curtains, and stood before the glass. I looked long at my straight hair, my low forehead, my chameleon-like eyes, my sharp nose and chin, and large mouth. From that day to this there has been no personal vanity in regard to my looks.

I packed my trunk, and saying to my few



friends good-bye, started for Cape Cod the second week in August.

I was not a great traveler, having never been beyond Massachusetts on the north, Massachusetts on the south, Massachusetts on the east, or Massachusetts on the west, and the time soon hung heavily on my hands. I spoke to the lady who sat in front of me, but as soon as I spoke I perceived that she had a back-bone, and though I made a great effort, conversation languished on our tongues, and we relapsed into silence.

At Boston I had to change cars, and waited a few dreary hours at the then "Old" Colony Depot, where all the children of the neighborhood came in, ragged, dirty, rough, and coarse, using the room for a play-ground, and where their mothers came and sat to do their darning and patching. The end of the rail route was reached in a few hours after leaving Boston, but from Hyannis to the journey's end I must go in an old-fashioned stage-coach, into which I clambered.

There were only ten of us inside, and one of the ten was a baby whose teeth were coming. I sat on the seat with a fat woman and her husband, but I did not think of complaining, for it was the back seat and next the ocean, of which, from time to time, I could get a glimpse or a grand, lonely view. On the middle seat were three young men,



two of whom were going home with the third young man, who spoke several times of the "old man" and the "guv'ner," and once of his mother as the "old woman." Facing me, with his back to the horses, was a man nearly twenty-five, I should think, but with a face so solemn that I fancied him constantly repeating to himself the "Dies Iræ." Indeed, for that matter, he looked sad and quiet enough to have been the monk of Celano himself, and at work composing the mass for the dead. Beside him sat a poor, forlorn, "washed-out" little woman and a child as forlorn looking as the mother who held a little, fretful baby.

It was any thing but a pleasant outlook, or more strictly speaking, "in"-look, for a twenty miles' ride in the heat, dust, and sand.

We had not fairly left Hyannis before the fat woman began to ply us all with questions, probably for the purpose of writing a book on the origin of the races, or the genealogy of the travelers in a stage-coach. She commenced with the little woman who held the baby; asked where she was from, where she was going, who she was, how long her husband had been dead, who were her parents and then gave a history to the woman of the woman's grand-parents, whom the fat woman knew, which was far from flattering or even interesting.



After she was through with this lesson in catechetics, she turned to me, saying: "Hum!" in a meditative tone; "*rather* little to be traveling alone. Come fur?"

"About eighty miles," I answered, rather proud of the great distance. The answer produced the desired effect, for she exclaimed in amazement, looking at me from head to foot:

"Du tell! Going fur?"

"To Chatham," I answered with less promptness.

"Du tell! Why, I live there. Is that your hum?"

I said "no," in a curt tone, then ashamed of my rudeness I lavished a smile on her, and added, "I am going on a visit."

"Are? Why, I know every body in Chatham. Who be you goin' to see?"

One of the young men nudged his neighbor, and they ceased conversation to listen.

I desired to be "courteous" to this woman, and really would have been glad to have "entertained" her, hoping she would prove an angel, but how could I drag in the names of my friends and have them discussed, as I knew this woman would discuss them, so I answered, "an old friend."

"So! Can't be so very old, seems to me, unless it's your grandmother. What part of the country be you from?"



"From the city of West," I replied, after a minute's hesitation.

"Du tell! Why, I've got a cousin that lives there; may be you know her. Her name was Eliza Ann Perkins, and she married a—a—, who did Eliza Ann marry, Daniel?" and the woman nudged her husband, who awoke from a quiet slumber with a great start and loud exclamation of "shoo!"

"Say, Daniel, who did Eliza Ann Perkins marry? She lives in West, you know, and this ere little, hom—," here she caught her breath and did not finish the word, but again repeated the word "little," "this little girl lives there, and may be she knows Eliza Ann."

"Daniel" could not help her in her perplexity, and after a few more questions, with unsatisfactory answers, she asked one of the young men to close the window as the "air was too strong."

The young man gave her a lofty look and went on with the conversation with the solemn gentleman in the corner. The fat woman grumbled awhile about his impudence, then sank into silence.

Soon the baby began to cry, the little girl to grow tired and grind her elbows into her mother's knees. The solemn gentleman took the little girl into his lap, saying, "I hold *my* little girl at home." The child sat there very contentedly, and he entertained her with stories, and I forgot his former



solemn manner, and when he smiled I actually thought him one of the handsomest gentlemen I had ever seen.

After awhile the young men left the coach, then the woman and children—the little girl, with pockets filled with bonbons—and the husband of the fat woman took the middle seat, and I began to enjoy the ride.

Excepting when I could see the ocean, the view would not be interesting to a person accustomed to the sight.

Sand everywhere; especially did it pour over the coach wheels, like water over a mill-wheel, and the grist each ground was not so very dissimilar. There were no ledges, no stones, only as we went along, we now and then saw great boulders, which may have been left there by some iceberg floating down ages ago. Though a sandy district, it was no barren waste; there were many little villages along at the numerous harbors, and settlements around the salt-works where the huge wind-mills forced the ocean into tanks, leaving it there to get back to its home again the only way possible—by going up into cloud-land, and going back as a gentle river.

Very seldom, if the records are true, do passengers in a stage-coach maintain such a silence as fell upon us. The woman put her head back in



the corner, closed her eyes, and, after a time, opened her mouth in a very unromantic manner and, I suppose, must have been asleep. Her husband put his arms upon the coach door, leaned his chin upon his arms, and in this graceful manner looked upon the beauties of nature as the coach rolled slowly along. I, too, looked from the window, but after awhile I found myself oftener looking at the face opposite. The gentleman seemed to be in a deep reverie, with his eyes upon some place in the distance, and took no notice of the country or of us.

I grew tired of the scenery; there was no pleasure in looking at the *open* countenance beside me, I felt in awe of the solemn face opposite. I wished I was at my journey's end, and, without knowing it, I sighed.

Upon hearing, or noticing the sigh, the gentleman looked at me, with the same benevolent smile he bestowed upon the little girl, and said: "You are growing weary?"

"Just a little," was the reply, and I turned resolutely toward the window, and appeared to be examining the landscape.

"The scenery *does* grow uninteresting on a warm August day, to any one but a native of this country."

I made no reply.



"The people who live here think this the most delightful country in the world."

"Because they have never seen any other country, I suppose," I replied, after a minute's silence.

"Indeed, you are mistaken ; most of them have seen something of nearly every country where a ship sails," he replied, with one of his beautiful smiles.

"Why, who are the people?" I asked.

"Sea captains and sea-faring men," and he told me anecdotes of many whom he had met. He gave an interesting account of trips he had made with them along the Atlantic coast, and of one trip to the Mediterranean in a sailing vessel.

He ran back over the history of the Cape, to the time of the first authenticated visit of a white person upon the coast of Massachusetts, in 1602. He told about the sand dunes farther along on the coast, about the pleasure trips from Hyannis to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, and I really felt sorry when the woman awoke and exclaimed, "There is the first house in Chatham."

What was my surprise, when the coach stopped at my friend's, and Mrs. Raymond came running out to meet me, to hear her exclaim, after her greeting to me, "And you there too, James!" And the stranger alighted and kissed her, and,



without waiting for an introduction to me, said, "I *must* see that baby," and walked up the yard into the house.

"So that is your brother, Dr. Oliver, about whom I heard so much at Leicester, those last years we were at school?"

"Why, yes; did n't you find out who he was?" And I walked toward the house, feeling slightly vexed because he did not tell me who he was and where he was going.

We found him tossing and playing with Minnie, but he put her down when Rosella introduced us, and making a profound bow, said, "I am very happy to know your name, and that my stage-coach acquaintance is my sister's friend. I have often wished to meet Miss Greenough," and with these few words he turned to the baby again.

Rosella took me to my room, but while dressing for tea there was a faint shadow of a pain in my heart which I had never felt before. All through my school-days I had heard of Rosella's brother; I had read his letters to his sister; I had known of his struggle for an education, and his self-denial in helping his sister to obtain one also; of his success in his chosen profession; and here he was an old married man, with a little girl of his own, and his sister had kept all these things from me. Why did I care for this? I was sure



that I could not tell, still I felt wronged because I had not been told.

At tea he talked with his sister and Mr. Raymond, hardly bestowing a look upon me, and after tea walked off with his brother-in-law, and I did not see him again until the next morning at breakfast.

That day all the friends and relatives of the family called. And every body was brother-in-law, or brother, or cousin of his neighbor's; and a series of invitations were given to go to picnics, clam chowders, boat rides, fishing excursions, to the "island," or to "the beach." I had never dreamed of such hospitable people as were these on the Cape. I seemed to be the guest of the whole village, and each soul made effort to outdo his neighbor in kindnesses.

On Monday we went in a sail-boat off to "the island," to go in bathing where the water was deep at the first plunge, and which was my first delightful experience of a bath in the ocean. The next day was a picnic with friends at the lighthouse grounds. The next, a ride "into the country;" and with what anxiety these people, who could with comfort ride upon the roughest ocean wave, clambered into the carriage, fearing the doctor would not be able to drive the two meek-looking horses provided from the village hotel.



When Sunday came, it really was the pleasantest day of the week. The church looked as though no one remained at home. There was the gray-headed man, so old and feeble that he tottered as he walked reverently up the aisle. The matron with all her children filled the pew, and with bowed head prayed for the absent husband and father, thousands of miles away, with the treacherous ocean between him and his loved ones. The wife of the captain, the wives of the owners of the many vessels that went from the harbors of neighboring cities, dressed in rare India shawls, and silks such as a queen might covet, came in with faces as free from care as though their husbands and sons were only away at the next town, and would be at home at night. There were many sad faces, and bowed forms clothed in mourning, for only the Winter before a vessel had been lost at sea, and owner, captain, officers, and crew went from this quiet village. The sermons we heard there were impressed upon the heart, never to be effaced. The man from the pulpit preached Christ and him crucified. There was that eloquence and earnestness which carried the conviction that the speaker lost sight of self, and felt that it was "woe" unless he could help his fellow man.

He told us one day of God's love—of his won-



derful love to man. He told it in such a way that we felt sure that God so loved his children that never would he allow one sorrow, one burden to come to any heart, unless it needed just that trial to purify and uplift it. In one sermon he talked about patience, and the folly of worrying. If God cares for the little insignificant sparrow, will he not care for those for whom his Son hath died? What do you gain by worry? How much, rather, have you lost? Why God tells us to be patient, and to take no thought of the things of this world—no *anxious thought*—is because he *wants* us to be happy, and he sees how needless are our anxious cares. Another time he told us how to prepare for the work and the trials of each day; new grace is needed each morning, for each morning is the beginning of a new life. No two days are alike in their temptations, cares and trials, in their opportunities to do good and to overcome evil.

I can not tell why these sermons were so impressed upon my mind. I had heard before, and I have heard since, more learned, more eloquent, and more pathetic sermons, but never anywhere or at any time any which continue to cling to me, and be the source of strength and help, like those I heard at Cape Cod.

How ennobling was each service of those Sabbaths! As I look back I do not wonder, for I was



worshipping with heroes and martyrs, though I knew it not.

One week was planned a trip to Hyannis, and from there to Martha's Vineyard and Gay Head. But it stormed the day we intended to go, so that we were housed, and the only outlook we got was through the telescope from the cupola of the house. There we sat hours each day, watching the ships, our friends being able to name some as they passed by to New York or Boston harbor.

That week we spent one day at "the beach." This is an island, or at low water, a peninsula, which is ten miles long, and from half a mile to nearly a mile broad, and separated from the mainland by a bay, in some places a mile wide. The beach is smooth and hard, and in many respects like Galveston Island in the Gulf of Mexico, which I saw years later. We started for our day of picnicking, about twenty of the friends whom we had met, in a sail-boat, with tents, cooking utensils, and hearts full of bright anticipations. The wind was not in our favor, and our zigzag journey took us much longer than we expected. I was glad when we did reach the shore, but felt unequal to the task of talking with any one, so made a pretense of looking for shells, and wandered across the beach to the shore of the ocean.

After walking along the shore, gathering the



treasures that the waves had left, I saw, at what seemed a short distance, a little hut, which had been partially hidden by a sand-hill. Supposing the island to be uninhabited, I felt considerable curiosity to know who could live here alone, and went toward the building. As I drew near I saw no signs of life, so I pushed open the door and looked in. There was only a bed in the room, but in the fire-place lay pine knots ready to kindle, and a box of matches near by. On looking around I found a manuscript pinned to the wall, and it was a description of the island, the distance from the light-house, and directions of what to do, all given for the use of shipwrecked mariners.

As I was reading the paper and thinking of the dangers of the sea, and the kind feeling in humanity prompting kindnesses like this the world over, a shadow fell across the door-way, and looking up I saw Doctor Oliver.

“So you are here meditating upon the ways of life—and of death, too.”

I walked out of the hut and looked for the crowd I had left, but I could not see any one, and could not tell from what direction I came.

“Rosella missed you, and sent me on a voyage of discovery,” said the doctor, following me as I went toward the shore.

I said that I was very sorry to trouble him, and



I really felt at that minute as though I should rather be under obligations for a kindness to any one else in the world. He had been very silent all the morning, and had not spoken to me, only as he was obliged to speak. I did not care for the attention of young men; indeed, their company had usually given me very little pleasure, but a man as old, as sensible, and intelligent as this gentleman, who was the brother of my friend, I should have liked to treat me as though he thought I was the bright, well-educated woman that I considered myself to be. I had always rather prided myself on my education and general knowledge of what interested thoughtful persons, and this man, whom I had for years looked upon with respect and admiration, had almost ignored my presence for several days. But during the walk back, his earlier friendliness returned, and the friends in camp were only found too soon for my real pleasure.

What a wonderful dinner that was! Our table linen was spread on the clean sand, and our plates the beautifully tinted quahaug shells. The clam chowder was cooked in an iron kettle hung on a stick over the fire; the broiled fish, the stuffed fish roasted in the ashes, the oyster patties, the quahaug pies, the roasted ducks, and the Saratoga potatoes were all cooked as only these Cape Cod housekeepers



know how to cook such things, and we ate with an appetite, such as is only gained by salt-water bathing and salt-water breezes.

When we were ready for home the tide was in, and as there was no dory, each must wade to the boat, or be carried. The men took off their boots and stockings, and those who had wives picked them up first, carrying them in their arms, making a picture surpassing Copley's Landing of the Pilgrims. The men came back for the remaining portion of the party, and I fell to the care of Doctor Oliver.

I was glad for the first time in my life that I was small, and weighed only one hundred pounds. But when he put me in the boat, saying, "Take this lump of vanity," I declared I wished that I weighed three hundred.

The next day, it was all day on the water, fishing. The next, shell hunting at "The Island." Each day new pleasures, until the week came for me to go home. The day before I was to leave it rained. I was really glad to rest, and with a new book on the lounge in the library, I was prepared to "enter heaven" in the same way as did the poet Gray.

I had read snatches from the book—it was "Undine"—and I was in the most fascinating part, where the cavalier came through the haunted for-



est, and met Undine at the fisherman's hut, and loved her, and when they were married, she, for the first time, had a soul—just here, when I had rather go on with the story than have a call from the Queen of Sheba, Doctor Oliver came in.

We had become really friendly in all these weeks, and I felt sure that he thought I knew enough and was good enough to be his sister's friend. He found what book I was reading, and tried to laugh at me for reading "fairy stories." But I had found out that we liked the same books, so he did not annoy me by his ridicule.

He quoted Emerson to me, and declared he was right in saying that it was economy of time to read only old and famed books, and he knew that I had certainly "wasted" (according to Emerson) many valuable hours since I had been at the Cape, reading "Enoch Arden," "Potiphar Papers," "School-days at Rugby," "Aurora Leigh"—here I stopped him by asking if he would keep a woman on Pindar, Martial, Gibbon, Homer, Milton, and Shakspeare?

"Is such reading what you keep your wife meditating over?" I at last inquired, determined to make him speak of her.

"It is the way I shall teach my little girl to walk," he replied, laughing.

"How old is your little girl now?" I inquired.



"Really, I do n't know; not far from thirteen or fourteen. But she is small of her age, and not very strong, so I have not yet offered her a dose of Pindar, or even Homer."

"Why, how old are you?" I bluntly asked, when he told the child's age.

He smiled as he replied, "Let me see, I must be—why, I must be twenty-four. I declare, how old I am growing."

"How old is your ——, is Mrs. Oliver?"

"Who? Nellie's mother?"

I nodded assent.

"She must be—really I do n't know—but I think she must be nearly forty."

I looked at him in amazement. A wife fifteen years older than himself. But when was he married? Of course she was a widow. Remembering the fat woman in the stage, I said, "Du tell! but when, and how long have you been married?"

He began to laugh. "So you really did think that I was married?"

"Certainly. You've called Nellie your little girl. Is n't she your daughter?"

"She is my dead brother's child, and I board with her mother."

I began to feel strangely awkward. I had always felt free to talk with married men, for I knew that they could not imagine that I was fall-



ing in love with them. I had so often heard my brother and his friends laughing about this or that girl that was "smashed" or "over ears in love," until I fancied that all the young men felt if a young lady treated them in a frank and friendly manner, that she must be in danger of losing her heart, so I had always felt a constraint in my manner when in their company. But here was a man with whom I had been as free and frank in conversation as if he had married my sister, or my grandmother, and now, all of a sudden, I find that he really is one of the young men of whom I had always been afraid. I began to meditate a retreat from the library, when he said:

"If I'm not married, I intend to be soon."

"Ah!" said I feeling, I thought, strangely relieved. Still, there was a little dislike to the fact—probably fear lest he'd not get the right wife.

"Yes, this Fall, I expect."

"I'm sure that I congratulate you, and—and, I hope you'll be very happy." What did make me hesitate in my congratulations, and why could n't I feel more interest in the matter. But I added, as though it was to me the most interesting subject in the world, "Have you known her long?"

"Yes, five or six years since I first met her. She was about fourteen then. Have known a good



deal about her the last four years," was his reply.

I began to realize that I was fast losing what little interest I had at first in this matter, and I thought I must make an effort to get away, lest he notice how indifferent I was. Indeed, I felt that he already had noticed, for he added, to incite my curiosity, "She was a school-mate of Rosella's."

"Where? At Leicester Academy?"

"Yes."

"Then perhaps I know her."

"Not very well, I think," he answered with a smile. "Still, she was intimate with Rosella."

"Rosella had but few intimate friends; I knew them all; what is her name?"

He did not reply. I looked up at him, and found his eyes looking into mine.

What was it I read there? I looked away in confusion, and reached out my hand for my book. He also reached for the book, and kept the hand that held it, and said, "I think you've guessed the name, Miss Greenough—dear Helen. From the first time I saw you, at church in Leicester, I felt a peculiar interest in you, and from the day of your graduation I have loved you. Rosella knew this, but she declared that she knew you so well that she knew I never could win you if I



sought you as my heart dictated. Besides, I had no home I could offer you then. I have now a name, a home, and the prospect of ease and comfort for my wife. I can not tell if you love me, but will you let me hope that you can learn to care for me—that you can learn to love me?”

Ah! it was n't anxiety lest he should not find a suitable wife. I knew I honored him; I knew that I thought him superior to any man I ever had met, and that I was sure his equal was not in the world. Could it be that I could really love this “solemn-looking” man, and give myself into his care? “Yes, I believe I really can love you, James Oliver,” I thought; and he read the thought in my eyes, only he translated the “can” into the word “do.” He took my face in his hands, and gave it an earnest, searching look, saying at last, “Mine; my own. And may God do so to me, and more also, if I ever bring any thing but peace and joy into your life.”

What a feeling of rest filled my heart. I had found a place of refuge. It seemed as though I had always known him; that we had even existed in some other world, and I had known him there. I felt that there was no other gift on earth for which I wished to ask. A noble soul to care for me more, to shield me, to love me better than any one else in all the world. My independence, my



pride, my self-will, all left me, and with a feeling of trust, of thankfulness, I bowed my head upon the library table, and my heart was melted into one great song of praise.

Not long after, when Rosella came to call us to dinner, she opened her eyes in pretended astonishment to see me sitting with my hand clasped in her brother's. I did try to withdraw it as she opened the door, but it was held with a firm grasp. James must needs tell her all, and she smiled when she said, "O, I knew if you only thought that he was married, you'd not be always running away from him, but would appear your own honest self. I told him to make your acquaintance in the stage from Hyannis, for you could n't escape then."

No more walks over the dusty sidewalk; no more climbing stairs to the noisy school-room; no more hearing of classes that were always at the beginning of the books; no more gazing from my chamber window upon Job's Coffin, on sleepless nights. Ah! I had found in that library that September morning, a different heaven from any I had anticipated.

Is this "heaven" which I have found? Yes, I think so. It is a bit of the "kingdom within." Each year we have known each other we have learned to know and love and trust each other better than in the year before. Each year we have



been mutual helps to each other in the journey of life. Each helps the other intellectually, and each helps the other spiritually, also.

My home is a large, square house, shaded by tall elms and climbing vines, in a pretty town near Boston. I have never been to Saratoga or Newport during the fashionable seasons, but we have often been to Cape Cod, to Chatham, to the beach, and the "life-saving hut." And we have sat in the old library and talked of past happiness, planned for the future, and rejoiced in the present, I all the while wondering how I came to make such a mistake in believing that I was predestined to make my life-work that of a schoolma'am.



## XV.

### A. Story of To-day.

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**A**LMOST daily have we heard the questions :  
“ What will Mrs. A. think of me if I do  
this or that?” “ What will Mrs. B. think  
if I dress in such a plain garment?” or “ What  
will C. think if we go to such a place, or associ-  
ate with such people?” And the questioner spends  
more real thought over these questions than he  
ever did over the solution of a problem in Euclid.

Would it not be more sensible to ask, What  
shall we think of ourselves if we do these things?  
Are we living for ourselves or for our acquaint-  
ances? Do we have a pretty home for our own  
comfort, or to gratify those who may occasionally  
enter it? Do we wear plain garments to gratify  
our own quiet taste, or that others may see our  
“ good works?” “ Do we adorn ourselves to  
please our husbands, or that others may envy us?”

We should be very much happier in life if we  
would only form a correct idea of what a person  
in our station in life could do, and of what we can



not consistently do, and then do the right thing, regardless of Mrs. Grundy.

We know this is a hard thing, when we think of the way in which we have, from childhood, been educated, but if it were not for the cares of this world—we forgetting that they are unnecessary cares—so many of them—we could rise to a freer, nobler, higher, grander life, and we have often wished that we could fix a principle within us that should make us regard, first of all, duty in these matters, and live more within self, so that we might attain contentment and real pleasure.

Instead of pleasure, one has only uncomfortableness when following one to curry the favor of a smile or a passing notice, and then having to take so much pains as to make it noticeable, to tell the remark made to us by “our particular friend, Mrs. Rich.”

We are often reminded of a picture we once saw, where a king sat on an elevated throne; a trifle beneath the throne was a duke holding the hem of the king’s garment; beneath the nobleman stood a statesman holding the train of the nobleman; beneath the statesman a man of wealth was clinging to the skirts of the one above him, and on, and on, others in the same manner with graded rank, until the last person in the long,



winding trail was a beggar holding on to the tattered skirt of the chimney-sweep.

It matters not what position of life we may be in, we shall find some one, who, whether he really is or is not, holds himself somewhat above us; it may be only a step, or it may be so immeasurably above, that he has fixed a gulf between that we can not cross, and he mentally ridicules us for making the attempt to do so, or for trying to ape him on our side of the chasm, and we, even while persistently striving to do this, are very uncomfortable, and often positively unhappy.

We know that wealth, style, or parade, will give any one a certain influence in the world, and we often see those who will do a wealthy person a favor, seeming to consider it an excellent investment for personal aggrandisement, but it really does not pay to lose one's self-respect and independence for the chance of even gaining a lift up one round of the ladder of society.

With many a woman, most of her troubles in life come from her anxiety about others' opinions of her dress and house. When we stop to think of this, we are ashamed to acknowledge to ourselves that we are guilty of such folly, but in our hearts we know we are; we are making a sham-life for other people to look at, and such "other people," too! Why, the very ones for whom we



put on this outside show, have so little regard for us, that they would, without hesitation, snub us if we met them in the presence of some one who held the train of one far higher than themselves.

We have been reading Howells's story in the *Atlantic*, and we know that there is many a Mr. Arbuton in the world (only we think the larger majority is of the feminine gender), who unhesitatingly ignores the presence of a friend when in the society of those on a higher round of the ladder.

We took up an Eastern paper this morning and read: "J. Q. Homer, who realized \$500,000 on raised certificates, is but forty years of age, and has, heretofore, sustained an enviable reputation. The difficulty in his case seems to be extravagance beyond his legitimate means. His wife has been in the habit of wearing diamonds of many thousand dollars in value, with dress rich enough to correspond."

It was the extravagance of Mrs. Homer that ruined her husband, morally and financially. I was well acquainted with her before marriage, and I believe that to-day they would have been happy and respected if it had not been for her inordinate desire to have what her wealthier neighbors had. She was accustomed to luxury, and, though John Homer was a good business man when



she married him, he was not rich, and could not afford to live as though he was. But he could not deny the wife whom he so dearly loved any expressed wish, be it ever so unreasonable, and now he is ruined. He must go through life with heart bowed with bitter grief, realizing that he has the scorn of all honest men—and all on account of the envy and covetousness of his wife.

They had been married four or five years, when I spent a few months with them, and during that time these sins grew like the gourd that in a night overshadowed Jonah. The flame of wrong desire may have been kindled, but the first time I saw the blaze was in her expressing a wish for a new piano, like one owned by a very wealthy friend.

Mrs. Homer had been making fashionable calls one afternoon, and when her husband came to tea, he said :

“ Well, Elva, did you have a pleasant time this afternoon, and were your friends at home ? ”

“ Yes, rather pleasant,” she replied, in an indifferent tone. “ We made five calls,” she added, after a pause, “ and all were at home but Mrs. Ed. Wesson.”

“ I know but little about that kind of business, but, as our black Joe would say, ‘ ’Pears like ’t was a smart day’s job,’ ” was his laughing reply.



"I am astonished at your slang," said Mrs. Homer, in a dignified way.

I had often seen Elva at school, when disturbed by troubles, real or imaginary, and I knew that she had met with something this afternoon particularly to annoy her. She was usually quite amiable, and seldom was unkind by word or look to the man whose idol she was.

Mr. Homer looked hurt at her remark, and turned his head toward me to see if I noticed it; but I was, at that minute, very much interested in a painting which hung on the opposite wall.

"There's the tea-bell," he said, looking relieved that some sound had broken the silence that had fallen upon us.

When we were seated at the table, covered with the finest of linen and delicate china, loaded with the rarest dainties of the season, Mr. Homer bowed his head to thank the Giver of these perfect gifts; and, although Elva bowed her head also, I hardly think that she noticed what he said, for her first remark, a minute after, showed where her thoughts had been.

"I met Mrs. Lincoln on the street this afternoon, and she had on an elegant camel's-hair shawl. It made my Paisley look so mean that I felt ashamed to stop and speak with her. I saw her look at my shawl, and smile sort of pitifully."



Mr. Homer looked at his wife in astonishment, and I, who knew her so well, was surprised that a woman who really had every thing so pretty and elegant, and who knew that her husband was not a rich man, could allow herself to have such feelings, and more than that, so wound her husband by expressing them.

But, after a few minutes, he replied, "I am sorry that you had such a feeling. I thought, when I selected your shawl last Spring, that it was very pretty. It is exceedingly fine, of a desirable pattern, and not another in the city like it. But, my dear, would you exchange shawls with her if you also had to take the husband who purchased it? I suppose the reason she married the old man was to get good clothes. Poor woman! that is all she does get, for he is too selfish to really love any one but himself. Would you exchange your handsome husband for old Lincoln and all her fine things?" and Mr. Homer laughed good naturedly.

But nothing turned his wife from her wicked thoughts. She had allowed that envy, which Job says, "slayeth the silly one," to enter her heart, and it had killed all her true and noble feelings, and left her in a wretched condition, worse than sickness or poverty could have made her. Soon she spoke again :

"I called at Mrs. Col. Bent's, and she has her



parlors refurnished—elegant velvet carpets, that were made for her rooms; curtains of real lace, that never cost a cent less than two thousand dollars for each window,” and she looked up with a triumphant glance, which said, “Now do you wonder that I am feeling vexed and uncomfortable?”

“Two thousand dollars a window for curtains! Why, Elva, one window would have helped all us boys through college, and how many other boys there are who are sacrificing, just as Frank and Ned and I sacrificed. Two thousand dollars! Six windows—twelve thousand dollars for curtains! and so many poor fellows working themselves into early graves to obtain an education. Twelve thousand dollars for curtains, and the woman who has them never had any acquaintance with the elements and laws of her mother tongue. Every time she speaks I fancy Murray restless in his coffin. It is disgraceful in me to ask you, but did she have on the dress ‘with lace arranged to *stipulate* a cape over the shoulders?’ Twelve thousand for curtains at her parlor windows, and her poor old mother dependent on the charity of her distant relatives, because the old lady reproved her daughter for her extravagance and folly! The children going to ruin as fast as their father’s money can aid them on the down grade. O Elva, one person does not get all the good things in this life. I think that



they average about as evenly as a good Father can distribute them. Would you, with your education, talent, and natural refinement, with our well-regulated home and beautiful baby-boy, change places with her?"

"I have no desire to change places with her, but I do wish you to know just how we are living."

"I do know," said Mr. Homer. "This is excellent bread, so white, and light and sweet; and such butter—real gilt edge—but few city people can get it. These preserved oranges and pineapple are delicious, and the sponge-cake—"

"How absurd you are," said Elva, interrupting him; "you know that I did not mean that. You may say what you please about Mrs. Bent's curtains, they were just perfect, and I hope the day will come when I can have some just like them. If you raise such a cry over her extravagance, I do n't know what you would say to the new things at your dear friend Griffin's. He has just purchased another picture that cost five thousand dollars; and she had on the loveliest silk—almost stands alone—and her children were dressed elegantly. They are going to Europe soon, and will be gone two years. I envy her so much. Just think of it; two whole years in Europe!" and Elva paused for breath.

"I've seen that picture of Griffin's, and it is a



gem. I am not surprised that he was tempted into purchasing it, and am glad that he has the ability to gratify his taste for the beautiful. I do not call them extravagant; they are using the same house and furniture that they had when first married. His books and pictures would really tempt one to covet, if he were not so free with them that his friends enjoy them almost as much as though they were their own. I think he can well afford these things, for his income is large. And in having these things he does not forget whose steward he is, and is very ready to do for every good cause and every needy person. I know his wife is always well dressed, but I've heard you say that she keeps her clothes forever, and you know what a really economical dress a good silk is. But you need not envy them their pictures. We have good ones, and some of them rarely fine. Father was a good judge, and his pictures were a legacy of which we may well be proud. You need envy none of your friends their pictures."

"Who talked about envy?" said Mrs. Homer, rather sharply. "I only wanted you to know how the people with whom we associate live, and what fine things they have."

After a minute's silence she added, in a tone that indicated a decision as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, "I have made up my



mind to one thing, and that is, that I must have a new piano. Mrs. Kendrick has a new 'parlor grand' that is perfectly magnificent, and when I thought of her ever playing on our old thing I fairly blushed. Why, the keys are actually yellow with age, and the frame is so old-fashioned."

"Not so very old-fashioned, my dear," said Mr. Homer, in a wearied and sad tone; "five years old last Winter. Who was it that exclaimed when it came, 'O, what a beauty! I shall *never* tire of this?'"

"You need not repeat what I was foolish enough to say during the honeymoon; every one says silly things then. It is useless to try and turn my thoughts from a new piano, for I am determined to have one."

Nothing more was said by Mr. Homer on the subject of the piano, but every time Elva went on the street she dragged me in to see, first a "Chickering," then a "Gorham," a "Steinway," or some kind of an "elegant square grand," till she had her mind fixed upon one for twelve hundred dollars.

Her husband was a merchant, and had been in business about ten years, and had a very good income, for, instead of spending his money to interest his acquaintances, he had kept all, except what was needed for household expenses, in his business. There had been times when he could have spared



twelve hundred dollars for his wife, and it would not have greatly troubled him, but just now he needed every dollar for his Winter stock of goods, and, besides, the money market was tight. But when Mrs. Homer had determined to accomplish any end, it had been her boast that she never failed.

In a few weeks she said, "Well, John, when will you get the new piano?"

"New piano! What does the child mean?" and came the ever-ready pleasant laugh.

"Have you forgotten so soon what I said about a piano? Have you noticed the shabby one in our parlor, and that it is never used?" said Elva, with a queenly air that seemed to say, "Am *I* deigning to explain this again?" and without further explanation she said; "I have one selected at Leland's, and wish that to-morrow you would stop and look at it."

"I have not thought of purchasing a new piano. Ours will do this five years yet, and besides, I can not spare the money this Fall. We shall have to be really very economical this Winter, for we are going to see hard times."

"That is just the way; I never wanted any great pleasure to come into my life, but you always saw reasons why I could not have it. I think it a great pity that I married such a 'poor'



man. We do n't begin to live in the style of the poorest of our acquaintances, and every body knows how mean you are."

When Elva allowed her temper to rule her, she said many things for which she was afterward sorry. Her husband knew this, and always treated her as we do a fretful child, never allowing himself to answer impatiently when she was in such a mood, and at this time left the room, saying pleasantly, "I guess I will go down town a little while."

She heard him close the street door, knowing that he had intended to spend the evening at home, and instead of blushing for her really insulting remark, she said, "He need not think that he can subdue me this way I will have a piano. It is all nonsense his crying 'hard times' and danger of his going under. I do n't believe one word of it."

I made no reply, hoping that conscience would say to her, "Your husband has always been truthful with you;" but she would not let it sleep, but amused herself with a book until bed time. She did not use ceremony with one who had been her room-mate for years at boarding school, so said at nine o'clock it was time for us to retire, for she wanted to be asleep when John came, that he might see that he had not punished her by going out to spend the evening.



The next morning the breakfast was eaten without a word from Elva, only as she was obliged to speak. At dinner it was the same. Five happy years had this couple lived together as one, and that day, the wife who had promised to love, cherish, and make happy the home of this noble, Christian, man, sat at the head of the table silent, with down-cast eyes, the lashes sweeping her cheeks, and a grieved look about her mouth, which would have been really touching if I had not known the cause of it, and thought what a wicked woman she was to hurt her husband in this way.

After he had gone, she said, "I will just show him that I will not yield."

Although there was a life-long friendship between us, I knew how useless would be words of mine, but I said :

"Is not Mr. Homer right? He knows best about his business affairs. Why not wait until another year for the piano?"

"I do n't care if he is right," she pettishly exclaimed. "If I yield now, I shall always have to. I know how *you* feel. I've heard you talk, but *I* think a wife has as good a right to have her way as her husband has to have his, and I'm going to have a piano as good as Mrs. Kendrick's."

During the afternoon we heard an unusual noise in the hall, and, lo! a new piano had been



sent, which was even more elegant than the one which she had selected, with a note from her husband, saying that he had rather fail than see her unhappy.

She saw the old piano depart, but with different feelings from what she anticipated. She really had become attached to it, and, besides, the new piano caused the other pieces of furniture in the room to have a much older look than they had before, and the room to have a sort of "pieced up" appearance.

It was but a little while before she thought she must have new carpets, and curtains, and then new furniture for parlors and chambers. Her husband consented to the change. He yielded against his better judgment the first time, and it was easier to do so the next and the next. Then came a silver-service, new china, new side-boards, new furnishing throughout. Then they must give parties, they must keep their horses and carriage.

Three years after I visited her again. They had a new house furnished in a costly manner, but just like each house on the fashionable street on which they lived. The same elegant mirrors, the same window-drapery, carpets of equal value, the paintings and the statuettes varied a little—about the same as the flowers and birds in the conservatories. Mr. Homer had changed his business, and



he looked care-worn and unhappy. There was all absence of family worship, and they had left the Church to which he had belonged from childhood, and they—or rather she—attended a more fashionable place to worship the meek and lowly Savior.

She was as anxious to have her dress or equipage equal or excel that of Mrs. Y., or Mrs. Z., as she had been ten years ago to have a piano that would equal Mrs. Kendrick's.

I remember with what delight she came home one day because she had noticed that the gold-mounted harness on her horse was finer than that belonging to the horse of some one of her acquaintances, as delighted as a child over a toy. And this—a *woman*! One who had been one of the most intelligent girls in the school where we attended—one who made promise of being a woman of piety, refinement, and real culture. Ah! there is culture—and culture. The *highest* type only comes from constant communion with the pure and holy One; only from a constant preference of higher thoughts to lower thoughts. The culture which society gives, or which the schools give—this culture alone is only a veneer—it does not alter the grain of the wood.

I do not think Elva ever found any real happiness in the life she was living. She gave herself no



time to devote to her children, and when she met them in the park with their nurse, passed them with some comment about their clothes. To her husband she was no real friend, and they had but few thoughts in common.

Her home, instead of being a sacred refuge for herself and family, was a place to adorn for the envy of her acquaintances.

Nearly every evening was spent at some gay place of entertainment—party, opera, concert, or reception. Her Sabbaths were not the “cool of the day,” in which she walked and talked with the Lord, but were, to her, days created for the purpose of wearing the heaviest of drab or black silk, and the costliest of plain bonnets, which the ingenuity of a French milliner could devise, to a church that she invariably spoke of as “The St. Aholiab.”

It (St. Aholiab) was filled with “all manner of work of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet.” The first Sabbath that I attended that Church I left home with her with the hope of gaining spiritual strength for the week of temptation to follow. As we walked the aisles, over the softest of carpets, soft music from the opera of “The Barber of Seville” floated on the perfumed air. I bowed my head, and asked for the “daily



bread," "the manna which comes down from heaven," and, O, the organ changed to "Les Huguenots," and the words this music brought to my mind made me end my petition with a sigh.

The minister, as he stood before us, looked as though he could give us real "bread," but all I remember of that sermon, which my friend declared to be "just elegant," were a few sentences which I can to-day repeat, but from which I never could get any particular benefit. He commenced something as follows: "Before the primordial fire-mist of the scientific creation began to evolve, . . . the atonement was the stand-point from which Jehovah mapped the atlas of immensity and drew the diagram of the universe." . . . "But ever and anon the interior divinity flashed forth in transfiguring splendors, that asserted and revealed the strange separateness of the Son of man."

Many a time in my life have I gone back in my thoughts, to that Sunday at "St. Aholiab"—the large church, with its vault above of blue, studded with shining stars of gold; in the chancel a French Gothic window, with many rare and curious devices; opposite, an Elizabethan window, with emblems and symbols; the name of the donor, who made sure of having his name "writ in the Church below," taking the most prominent place; clustered and plain columns, with entablatures of



the Doric, Tuscan, and Corinthian orders, supported arches beneath what my grandmother would have called a gallery, and the whole conglomerate of church and service being such a mixture of garish architecture and religionism that we were not surprised at the remark made by Mr. Homer, when his wife asked him at dinner why he was not at "the St. Aholiab."

His reply was: "I did not feel, to-day, ready to take it 'alf and 'alf, but went where I heard preached the religion of the old-fashioned kind, such as my mother loved. I'll go with you to Music Hall, to-morrow night, to console you, and to get my religion diluted, if you think the dose was too strong for me, for I went to hear 'Father Taylor' talk to 'his boys.'"

"How rude you are," was all the reply she vouchsafed.

The envious spirit which first gained a position in the heart of my friend, Mrs. Homer, which led her, the wife of a young man who had yet to make his way in this world, to feel uncomfortable because the wife of a rich old man had a better shawl than her own, kept her uncomfortable and unhappy through life, drove peace and joy from her home, and brought in a whole troop of the friends of envy—pride, covetousness, selfishness, self-love—to sit with her as constant guests. And the item



quoted from the Eastern paper shows the sad fate to which these guests of her heart brought her husband, her children, and herself.

O Elva Homer, you are not so very unlike others that I have known, and whom I know to-day!

Your unoccupied mind took food that contained no nourishment, but only the poison that ruined you; and it was not even a slow poison, it sent swift destruction.

We who know of the sad fate of Mrs. Homer will pray that we may conquer our besetting sins of pride and envy. They make a poison that brings no pleasure in the drinking of it, but is gall to the taste, and makes one a foe to one's self.

When I think of the week of unrest which I spent the last time I visited Mrs. Homer, and think of the times I have visited in other homes, less beautiful than hers, perhaps, but where was found peace, love, goodness, gentleness, meekness, long suffering, and faith, I am thankful that the wives and the mothers in our land are not all like Mrs. Homer. I am glad that with so many women Mrs. Grundy is of little importance, and, as women see how little comfort she brings, she is growing to be less and less cared about, and more seldom consulted. That so many women are trying, with all their powers, to be noble women, true wives,



and loving, patient mothers—trying with all their power to fit themselves for some use in the world, knowing that no stone that is ready for use will be left without its work to do—for this we are glad.


If the knowledge of the heavy burden that has now come upon Mrs. Homer will help any sister who reads her story to cease trying to make life a mockery, will aid her to pray that life may be true and earnest, assist her in answering her own prayers by plucking even the roots of envy from her heart, will help her to act her part in life independently, doing her duty regardless of the opinion of the world, and thus gaining the approval of “Our Father,” my story will have accomplished its mission.



## XVI.

### After Many Days.

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NE day, in early Spring, we brought to the sitting-room fire an old-fashioned band-box, made of thin wood, which was given my husband when a little boy by some aged relative, and which, among other treasures of his childhood days, found its way to our Kansas home.

After the heat had removed from the box the odor of—well, on account of the lining, I will call it sanctity, I picked up the box to carry it back to the store-room, when I noticed beneath the fancy paper lining another lining of newspaper.

I lifted the torn paper, and saw the name of a now prominent Washington correspondent of several Methodist publications. I pulled away a little more of the paper, and found that the box was lined with a *Zion's Herald* of 1844.

I smiled as I saw an item about a “donation party” in Leominster, Mass., to the “new minister,” but I read it all. That item suggested to me a “two-pound party” for our new minister, who



was coming in a week or two, just after conference, and was the cause of a hearty welcome to the new pastor and his family, the filling of an empty pantry, and the cause of a degree of rest to the overworked and over-burdened minister and his wife.

As I looked farther, I found a part of an article—only a few words:

“Tempted in all points, . . . as ye are.”  
“Touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” “The tender sympathy of a physician;” “the tone which says, ‘I, too, have suffered.’” “Because of this, . . . knows how to heal.” “Thine the power.”

I had been weary; I was tried; this was comfort coming to me just when I needed it. These few words, perhaps written with the prayer that they might comfort all who read, brought my Savior still nearer to me, not only as the soul’s most familiar Friend, but as the sympathizing Comforter in the wakeful hours of the night and the weary hours of the day—words, may be, that comforted my husband’s mother when her first-born was a little child, now brought comfort, after coming two thousand miles from this mother, to the grandchild’s mother as she hushes *her* own little one—words written long before I knew what words meant, to help and strengthen me as a Christian



woman, and show me how I can help others to bear their burdens—words penned in Washington, published in Boston in a weekly Church paper, to cheer and comfort a soul on the American Desert thirty-five years after they were written!

O, the constant miracle of this Gospel of Jesus Christ! And next to the blessed Book that teaches this Gospel, is the wonderful influence of the religious press. And the manner in which this seed is sown, and the result of the sowing! How often, in the last few days, have the thoughts come to me, “Ye know not what ye shall be!” and likewise—our words—our acts—we “know not.”

It is said that seeds, found among the mummies embalmed thousands of years ago, have often been life-giving; so our words may influence souls long after the voice is silent which uttered them.

A lady who had long been a Sabbath-school teacher was one day telling me of her earlier efforts, failures, mistakes, discouragements, and encouragements in the work. She said that she often thought of the little boy in John Falk’s German Charity School, and what he one day said.

After repeating grace at table—“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless the food which thou hast provided”—looking up, he said, “Why does the Lord Jesus never come?”

“Only believe, my child, and you may be sure



that he will come, for he always hears our invitations," answered his teacher.

"Then I shall place a chair and a plate for him," said the boy.

Soon there was a knock at the door, and a poor man entered, begging for a night's lodging. He was welcomed to the empty seat the boy had set, and the child said, "I think Jesus could not come to-night, so he sent this poor man in his place. Is it not so, master?"

"Yes, my dear boy, that is just it. Every cup of water, piece of bread, or kind word that we give to the poor, the hungry, the needy, for Jesus' sake, we give to him. 'Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto Christ.'"

So often, when cast down and discouraged because she saw no result from her work as a Sabbath-school teacher, had she thought of the German lad's remark. So often, when weary or despondent, and no inclination to do her allotted task, had the Master's reply encouraged her.

And she went back of her own work as a Christian, and gave the experience of the Sabbath-school teacher who was probably the means of leading her to Christ.

"She was a weak, delicate little woman," said this lady who was telling me her experiences,



“with coal-black eyes, and a manner that was very impressive. She used to speak to nearly every one of her class, during the progress of the lesson, in regard to their souls’ salvation. I always answered her lightly, and tried to turn the subject, but if a Sabbath passed, and she said nothing to me on the subject, I felt as though, for me, that Sabbath had no interest. I have no doubt that oftentimes my teacher felt as though her words made no impression upon me, but, to-day, I wish she could look down from glory, where she has been these many years, and know the result of her faithfulness. After I became a Christian, it seemed as though I never could learn to walk alone. Every thing within and without me rose in opposition to my highest purpose. I had no help from any mortal, for I was the youngest Christian in the Church, and those with whom I was thrown in contact understood me no better than they would have understood Greek. I was n’t a ‘born saint,’ but one good soul in that Church always prayed for ‘the young Christian,’ and seemed to have hopes of my becoming a saint some time. He spoke an encouraging word to me when he could, and though he knew it not—neither did I at that time—without doubt his prayers and words had greater influence to keep me near my Savior than any other human instrumentality.



“I was only sixteen when I took a class of boys in the Sabbath-school. One was the minister’s son—a wild boy; one a German lad, older than his teacher—Carl. Another, the son of a scoffer, and others, sons of members of the Church with which I was connected. I kept that class for several years; studied, worked, and prayed for those boys, but no good seemed to result from my labors. I loved my boys, they loved me, and often promised to become Christians, but wanted to wait for a more convenient season. After a few years I married, then we went to another city, and there I took a class of young ladies. My class constantly increased, but none of them became Christians. After three years I began to think that I had made a mistake, and, as a Sabbath-school teacher, my life was a failure. How I prayed for wisdom that I might find the right work to do for my Master. He had kept me so wonderfully; he had led me in such green pastures, by waters so still, my cup of earthly joy was always full; no good thing was he withholding from me, and yet I could not seem to do any thing for him whom I loved so much. A great feeling of discouragement at last crept over me, and during this time I went back to my old home on a visit.

“One Sunday evening, in the church where I was converted, at a prayer-meeting a young sol-



dier arose to speak ; it was just about at the close of the war, and he was one of the boys that was so long in my first Sabbath-school class. He said, ' I first went into the army without Jesus for my guide ; I was reckless, I cared for none of these holy things, but, yet deep in my heart I cherished the words and the prayers of a Sabbath-school teacher whom we loved very much. When we were in Virginia, one of my comrades began to attend religious meetings, and at last he became a Christian. He urged me to go with him, and I went to please him, but soon there was a growing interest in my heart for these things, and I sought opportunity to attend all the means of grace. The hymns were such as you used to sing here, and the prayers seemed meant for me. I began to read in my Testament, given me by the pastor of this Church, and to inquire what I must do to be saved.

“ ‘ At last I found peace, that peace which passeth all understanding, and my comrade and I told others what Christ had done for us. I can not begin to tell you how earnest my comrade was ; his love, his zeal, his earnestness made every place a heaven to our souls. He comforted the weary ones, bowed down with the burdens of their life ; the sick he cared for, and spoke to them of the home beyond the river, until they learned to lean



hard on him who has promised to go with us through the valley and the shadow of death. He strengthened the weak and the faltering, and gladdened the hearts of older Christians. After a long march he would read his little Testament for hours; and when the others were asleep, I have heard him praying and praising God. At the battle of Look-out Mountain he was severely wounded; I had two fingers shot from my left hand, and we were carried to the same hospital. I can't tell you how much he suffered, but he was so cheerful, so patient, and when death came, he hailed the grim messenger with joy. It opened the gate to him for eternal blessedness and glory. The last day he was with us I sat by his couch, and after I had written a letter to his mother, he said, "I must bid you good-bye, Robert, I am going home. I meant to have done more for Christ. I had hoped to do so much, but he knows best; it is all right. Be earnest, Robert, be faithful, and if you ever see our old Sabbath-school teacher, tell her that it was her words and her influence that helped me to Christ." He went over the river with joy and expectation. I see our old Sabbath-school teacher here to-night; and my comrade, you all knew him, was Carl ——.

"Imagine my feelings," continued my friend, "if you can, when I heard the name of that Ger-



man lad so long in my first Sabbath-school class, and imagine what I felt, to know that it was I to whom the soldier-boy referred. And this was not all. The poor, old, stricken German mother, in her mourning garments, came to me at the close of the service and blessed me—me—for what I had done for her lad. How good God was to let all this come to me at this time. I know I ought never to have grown weary in well-doing, but I was anxious lest I was filling a position which some one else could better fill. How good our Father is to us all along life's journey. I went back to my Sabbath-school work with renewed interest. I visited my scholars, I invited them to my home, I talked with them as my old Sabbath-school teacher talked to me. When I prayed for them I bowed with open class-book before me, and daily asked God to bless each one of my class. Soon, one after the other began to inquire the way of salvation. We had a pastor who had a genuine interest in the young; he was one who could plainly point to others the way of salvation, and from that class of fourteen ten came to the Savior and united with the Church during his pastorate.

“I used to think,” continued my friend after a short silence, “that ‘one of the least of these’ always meant children, but it means much more than that to me now. To me it is all the poor,



the sad, the neglected, the strangers, the weary and the heavy laden, and we never know who the heavy-laden are.

“One Sabbath I spoke with a stranger, who sat near me in Church, and as we went down the aisle together I asked where she lived, and introduced her to others. This lady and her husband became the most influential people of our Church, and that Sunday when I spoke she was so home-sick, so lonely, and felt herself so among strangers that she had decided in her mind that she would never again come to worship with us. She had every appearance of being any thing but one of God’s little ones, but rare laces and heavy silks do not always cover a joyous heart.

“We do not know what our words will do, neither do we know what the result will be if we fail to say the right words.

“About the time I became a Christian, I heard my mother and a friend of mother’s talking about the son of this friend, who was about my age, but no friend of mine. The friend said, ‘Edward thinks he is a Christian, and wants to join the Church, but his father and I both think that he does not understand himself. We talked with Deacon Grant, and he says that Edward is much too young to unite with the Church. I am inclined to think that I shall urge him to wait a few



years longer, and then he will understand what he is about. But, of course, if he *insists*, we shall not oppose him. His father thinks that if he should have strong religious influences thrown around him, as he might if he went into the Church, they would tend to handicap him in his race in life, and instead of his becoming a brilliant lawyer, and going in company with his father—as we hope he will—he might turn out only the stupidest of stupid, prosy ministers. I think it is all very nice for young people to go into the Church, especially girls, but somehow I think it hampers a man in his business relations with the world.’

“So Edward was held back, and he went back farther than his parents expected. He began to associate with a different class of boys, and the result, after many days of such training by his *Christian* parents, was, that he became, instead of the ‘eminent lawyer’ his parents so fondly hoped, or even the ‘stupid minister’ which they feared, a gambler and a thief, and is now serving out a long term of years in the State prison.”

After my friend ceased telling these experiences which had come into her life, we sat thinking over these things, and at last I said :

“So often in life I have seen the reward for evil or for good come. Sometimes the ‘many



days' seem long, but I suppose they are as 'few' as our Father can make them, and work out in us the result he desires. To have patience is the hardest lesson I have to learn."

Another friend who had listened to the conversation, all the time busily at work painting on a panel a bunch of apple-blossoms, turned toward us, with her palette still held by her thumb, and running the handle of her brush across her hand as if writing a message, said she had a story to tell, if we cared to listen.

I took another baby's sock from the mending-basket, and our artist friend, who was a capital story-teller, began, as she gave her brush a wave in the air, with a funny little flourish and laugh:

"The talk about 'after many days' sent me back to one very pleasant time nearly twenty-five years ago, when I was a little girl. It was one Christmas time at my Grandmother Lyman's. Every Christmas she had this text, made in ever-green, over the parlor mantle—'*Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.*'"

"One of the children asked grandmother why she had that text made every year, and then we all began to tease for a story, and if I can, I will tell it about as it all happened. I remember it well; it seems only a few days ago. I was a



little child then ; now I am a woman. Mother was then no older than I am now, and now she is in heaven. Grandma called me that evening to a hassock at her feet. She loved me so much. I remember just her loving look toward me, as she said, ‘ Well, well, if you must have a story, I ’spose you must. Here, Mabel, sit down here at my feet. But, it really ’pears to me that you ’ve had enough for one Christmas evenin’. Why, when I was a girl, we did n’t have no tree or any thing at Christmas ; but I ’ve heard my mother tell how they used, in London, when she was a girl, go about the streets singin’ carols Christmas night. I wish the boy singers would do that now. I should like to hear them just as my mother did. To be sure, it is beautiful to live now, but a few of the good old things ought never to have been left out.’

“ ‘ Tell us a little about the carols before you tell the story, grandmamma,’ said one of the boys. ‘ When were the first carols sung ? ’

“ ‘ On Bethlehem’s plains, I think, dearie,’ said grandmother, looking over her spectacles to Cousin Edward. ‘ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,’ ‘ was the first carol, I think. My mother used to sing the carol the London boys sang, and I noticed the same in that beautiful little primer song-book Aunt Maria bought for Bessie. The words are changed some, but the tune is the same.



Mabel, dear, can 't you go to the pianny, and let all the little ones sing,

“ I saw three ships come sailin' in  
On Christmas day, on Christmas day.’ ”

“ I ran to the piano, and great and small, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, grandmother, mother, and all of us sang the quaint, musical tune and words that my grandmother used, when a child, to hear her mother sing. Grandmother told us the second, third, and fourth verses, which repeated as did the first verse,

‘ And all the saints in heaven shall sing,  
On Christmas day, on Christmas day.’

“ The third verse,

‘ And all the souls on earth shall sing,  
On Christmas day.’

“ And the fourth,” and our friend, who had a clear, sweet voice, sang the whole.

“ “ And all the bells on earth shall ring,  
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,  
And all the bells on earth shall ring,  
On Christmas day in the morning.’ ”

“ Grandmother wiped her spectacles as we children crowded around her again. My little sister said, ‘ It was pitty; dranma; I like free ships on Drismas day.’ ”

“ “ Yes, my little dear, it is pretty. It just springs from the heart.’ ”



“ ‘I do n’t think any body ever wrote that,’ said a cousin, who was a great lover of music and poetry. ‘It is like Topsy, “it grow ’d.”’

“ ‘Yes, dearie, you are right; it was born from the soul, full grown, just as the *Magnificat* leaped from the heart of the Virgin.’

“ ‘Yes, dranma, but we do n’t know um. Tell us pitty story; a Drismas story, dranma.’

“O, how longingly and lovingly I look back to that Christmas time when we gathered around the dear grandmother with her beautiful face, her sweet, tremulous voice, her large eyes full of a pathetic beauty, and her wonderfully soft hand that caressingly touched our heads, I doubt not in solemn benediction. Dearly she loved all the dear ones she was so soon to leave, and dearly we all loved her whose life was love itself.

“Is there no royal way to the same loving life my grandmother led? Is it years only, that broadens the river, and makes it more beautiful, more grand as it nears the sea? Is heavenly sweetness, strength of mind and of will, joy of spirit only found by long years of patient self-sacrifice and self-denial?

“Why do we not learn the lesson sooner, that we may the sooner have the calm in the heart; that the sooner the winds and tempests shall be stilled, the north wind blow not, and the great calm come



down? I look back—and what? Have *I* practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice? Is it easier for me to deny self now than it was years ago? A little, perhaps. But the years have come and gone, like the Phoenix, each new year arising from the ashes of the old; and the years have been almost as near alike as were the birds, father and son. Then—as I look back—the river of life was not wide, and the waters were shallow; the banks were bright with beauty, the air filled with perfume and music; I floated along so smoothly, and the years went by so slowly. *Now*, the waters rush me along. I stretch out my hands to catch the over-hanging branches, that I may linger, if but for a day—but all in vain. The open sea seems just ahead. What am I taking there, beauty or ashes?

But grandmother's story! Can I, after all, go back in memory and imagination, and take up that story as grandmother told it, nearly a quarter of a century ago?

“When your gran'ther and I were young, he kept store in Sterling. Of course, just commencin' life, I wanted to help him save, so we lived in three rooms right over the store, and I used to go down and tend while he went up to dinner or supper. We always had a sort of table outside the store door, and your gran'ther used to keep a little



of every thing on it, sich as he kept in the store. One night in December, I went down as usual, and, as I glanced out through the glass doors, I noticed that your gran'ther had laid some turkeys and chickens, all dressed, good and clean, right on top. It was just before Christmas, and he wanted to tempt some one to buy. But when he came down stairs, says I to him, says I, 'I think you are risky to put them turkeys right handy for some one to steal.'

" 'Why, Dorothy,' says he, 'ain't you gettin' pesky careful all of a sudden? Who ever heard of any one stealin' in Sterling? I'm afraid that you are getting to think bad of your fellow creturs. I'll take the risk of my losing 'em that way; I'm enough site more feard't will turn warm, and they'll all spile.'

"I went off up stairs to eat my supper, clear off the table, and wash the dishes. After I'd taken my knittin', I was sort of lonesome, so I went down to set 'long of your gran'ther, just as I used to do often when there was n't much goin' on. Your gran'ther never sold any grog; his father was a minister, and his brother Silas was a minister, and his brother Enoch a deacon down in Boston; and as we had n't any liquor, our store never had loafers spittin' around, as they used to do over to Goulding's, at the corner. So it was quite proper



for me to go down and set with your gran'ther. Sometimes a neighbor, or one of the deacons in the Church—your gran'ther was a deacon afterwards—would come in and set awhile; but that night it was cold and dark, and we two sat alone, except now and then a customer, or some one for their mail, for the post-office was over in one corner of the store. Just as your gran'ther got ready to shut up for the night, a man come in and inquired the price of one of them chickens, and your gran'ther told him. The man looked at him with great hungry eyes, hesitated a moment or two, and then went out. We saw him walk by on the outside once or twice, but he did n't come in again. A few nights after, the night before Christmas, while I was washing my supper dishes, your gran'ther came runnin' up stairs, and says he:

“ ‘Run right down, Dolly, and tend store; that man has stole a turkey, and I want to ketch him.’

“ ‘Do n't do it, Stephen; do n't do it,’ says I, all in a tremble. But he only says, says he, ‘Why how you talk, Debby,’ and grabbed his coat and hat, and run.

“ ‘Well, he was gone may be a full hour, when he come back, all flustrated and confused like. I said, says I, ‘Did you ketch him, Stephen?’

“ ‘Yes,’ says he.



“ ‘Did you get your turkey?’ says I.

“ ‘ ‘T wan’t nothin’ but a chicken,’ says he.

“ ‘ ‘Well!’ says I, kinder sharp, ‘cause I was nervous and anxious like, ‘can’t you tell me about it without so many words?’

“ ‘ ‘Yes, Debby, I can,’ says he. But your gran’ther sot and sot, and did n’t speak a word, and I had at last to say, ‘Well!’ Then he spoke up, and says he :

“ ‘ ‘I’ll tell you what, Debby, I never want to see any thing like it again. The man was that new carpenter that has moved into the Fosgate house, down by the cross-roads. I got up to him just as he was goin’ up to his house, and I put my hand on his arm, and I says to him, says I, ‘You can come with me, young man; there is a place for thieves down to Worcester, in the county jail.’ He tried to pull away from me just at first, and then—you oughter have seen him, Debby. He dropped the chicken; ‘t wan’t nothin’ but one of Aaron Smith’s poor, little, miserable old hens, but he dropped it, and, says he, “Do n’t speak loud, for God’s sake. My wife will hear you. She is sick; the children are sick, and they are sick because they can’t get nothin’ to eat. We could n’t tell folks how poor we was. We do n’t know any one here; I can’t get work, and I hain’t eat nothin’ but one pertater for three days. My



wife and my babies have eaten their last morsel of bread. There is not a thing to eat in the house. There is nothing for them to-morrow nor the next day, nor the next. But I'm ruined now. If I go to jail it will kill my wife. O, my wife! my poor, little Mary!' and, Debby, he burst out crying, and I declare for 't, I cried too, like a great calf.'

"Your gran'ther always was a tender-hearted man, and he put that last on, 'cause he saw tears in my eyes, and he did n't like me ever to bear any trouble.

"'Well! Stephen,' says I to him, 'what are you goin' to do?'

"'I do n't know of but one thing to do, Debby,' says he, 'and that is to do accordin' to Scripture—just as you'd be done by.'

"'But,' says I, 'that do n't apply to thieves.'

"'I guess, Debby, it means all of God's creatures. Did n't he say to a sinner, 'Go and sin no more?' It is drefful easy to read the Bible, and to wish to be good, *and to say, Lord, Lord!*' but to my thinkin', beautiful talkin' and beautiful thinkin' ain't walking the road. And, Debby, just to do right once in a while, when the spasm comes on, do n't get us fur on the road. We'd never get in sight of the kingdom if we only went by jerks. You know, Debby, that I do n't believe in nagging the women-folks at home, and then putting a



silver dollar in the contribution box on Sunday. I ain't as good as I ought to be—your gran'ther *was* the best man I ever see—but I do try, Debby, to live up to my light.'

"And what did your gran'ther do but go right to work and fill a great basket with meal, and per-taters, and tea, and sugar, and pork, and put it on a sled, and that very night haul it down to that family? When he came back, says I:

"Wall! Stephen, I hope you feel better.' Your gran'ther always was better than I was. I was so anxious to save against a rainy day, that I should have growed close and stingy, I'm afeared if it had n't been for your gran'ther. But he was *always* just so good. He was not only always kind and pleasant, and patient with me, but he was just so good to every body. I do think, children, that the Lord Jesus walked with your gran'ther just as he walked with the disciples to Emmaus. He seemed to always have Him near. Everybody liked your gran'ther. The poor and the downcast, and the burdened used to come to him for help and comfort, and he never turned one empty away. He did n't do his goodness all up in a lump at Christmas or New-year, and throw it out in one chunk, and he never made resolutions enough at one time about being good to spread over his whole life. He took his religion



right with him every day, and every hour of the day, and he took it into his store, and he *always* brought it home with him. I'm telling you, children, what kind of a man your gran'ther was—you know why. I'd like *all* my boys to be like him. Why, he was so tender-hearted that he even once picked up the wettest, forlornest looking dog, that was whining outside, and he washed it, and warmed it, and fed it and made it comfortable—and it was after your gran'ther had done a hard day's work, too.

“Well, as I was saying, your gran'ther was good to that family, and found work for the man so that he could help himself, and he never told a soul how he first met the carpenter. That was another thing about your gran'ther, he never sounded a trumpet when he went about doin' good. I suppose 't is because I'm a woman, but I never could do a good thing but I wanted to cackle and let all the other hens know what I'd done.

“Well, one night, just ten years after, and just such a cold night, and the night before Christmas, too, we'd sot up late to put some things in the children's stockings—some raisins, and nuts, and candy, and I'd dressed two dolls in blue dresses and black silk aprons, for Harriet and Hannah, and we'd got Sammy a new sled, and I'd knit him some red mittens and a long scarf to tie round



his neck and over his ears. Well, as I was sayin', that night we were up late, and when we did go to sleep, we slept sound.

"The first I knew, I waked up e'en a-most stifled with smoke, and we jumped up and found that the store was on fire, and the stairs on fire, too. I was just stupefied, but heard your gran'ther say, 'O, Lord, our only hope!' and just then some one outside cried, and we run to the window. There were some of the neighbors a hollerin' and shoutin'. They went and got a ladder, and your gran'ther made me go first, and said he'd bring the children. We were both so sort of stupefied that we forgot Sammy, who slept in the little room at the head of the stairs. Your gran'ther brought Hannah and Harriet in his arms, and started back to call Sammy, who was 'most ten years old then. But just as he got half-way up the ladder it broke, and he got dreadfully hurt in the fall. I cried out, 'O, my boy! O, my boy!' and tried to rush into the store with the vain hope of some way savin' my boy. The people held me back, and I fainted clear away—the only time in my life.

"When I came to there was my Sammy in somebody's great coat a-rubbin' my hands."

"Was that my father?" I asked grandmother, greatly excited over the story.

"Yes, dearie, that was *your father*; *my* Sammy."



My little cousin asked where she was then, and her brother, almost four years old, answered with the satisfactory way of his sex, "Ho, *that* was afore you 'd comed."

I do n't know but grandmother would have stopped here, but my brother Fred wanted to know who the man was that saved father's life.

"Well, children, I 'spose you ought to know *who* it was. I 'll tell you *how* he saved Sammy. The man climbed on the shed away 'round on the back-side of the store, and broke in a window, and wrapped Sammy in his coat just as the flames caught the bedclothes, and brought him down in his arms—and, children, the man was the one who stole the chicken.

"When I could speak, I said to the man, 'How can I pay you? You 've saved my boy from death?'

"'The boy's father saved me and mine from worse than death,' he whispered, stooping over my face. 'I have made one payment of the great debt I owe him; one crumb of the bread he so freely scattered on the waters—one *crumb* now returns to him—after many days.'



## XVII.

### Books for the Children.

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**I**F, as we were taught in our school days, the educated man, when compared with one who is illiterate, shows nearly the same contrast as that which exists between a person blind and one who can see; if the possession of a cultivated mind places one above the little vexations of daily life; if it elevates the aims and purposes; if it gives latent power amid adverse influences; if it is an antidote to avarice, false pride, and pretense, there is nothing which can so help parents in this work of training their children as good books and good periodicals in the home—there is nothing which can so help the Sunday-school worker in training the children in the noblest and highest way as really good Sunday-school literature.

In the Sunday-schools in our country are many children who there receive nearly all the religious training that they will ever receive, and who there receive by far the larger share of what intellectual culture will be bestowed upon them. They will



be sent to the public school, off and on, as it is convenient for parent, or pleasant for the child, and learn how to read, write, and a little in arithmetic, a little in grammar—and that is all. At home they hear about the neighborhood gossip, the crops, the stock, and the personal affairs of their acquaintances. The reading matter set before them is mostly the neighborhood news of the county paper, with a love story on the “patent” outside, and to the Sunday-school worker who feels a downright interest in the children and young, is left all the work of molding and training spiritually and intellectually these for whom no one else cares; and to the question, “What shall we give these children to read?” come answers from *other* workers, as puzzled over the subject as is the one who asks the question.

*All sorts* of answers are given—good, bad, and indifferent—for reform, substitution and abolition, and by the wise and the unwise; and while the questions are being asked and the answers given, the children grow on and up into men and women. If the library is abolished, as many propose, and the substitute be the religious Sabbath-school papers, the children will grow up without the knowledge of any books. The great trouble now is with us all, too much reading of papers—reading with no intention of remembering beyond the present



need of the facts. If, from the books offered—which, as Tom Brown says, in the “Æneas Sylvius’s Letters,” are “neither fish nor flesh, nor good red herring”—we must make a selection, we should pray for the wisdom of Solomon.

Among the so-called religious books, such as we put in our Sunday-school libraries, are very few that meet the needs of a spiritually hungry child. The children who do hunger and thirst after righteousness are asking of us bread, and we are offering them only a stone.

We have several times been on committees for the selection of books for Sabbath-schools and public libraries, and have well conned what is offered for such purposes. There are many books purely intellectual, many bright, natural, and interesting, but none of them calculated to help a child spiritually—books which we would be glad for our children to read or to own, but not to take from a Sunday-school library for Sunday reading, hoping in them to find help and strength in the religious life.

On the other hand, simply because a book is religious, is no reason that it ought to be placed in a Sabbath-school library. The writer may have been too stupid to say any thing that is wicked, just as many persons are considered eminently pious, because they are not bright enough to be



very sinful. We do not want to teach our children stupidity and call *it* religion.

We remember several years ago a bright Sabbath-school scholar handing back a book with a remark like the following: "The children in that book became religious and all died young; mother said it was a good book, but I'm afraid."

Of course, we told him that in his case there was no danger of his dying of too much goodness, such a thing had n't happened since the days of the martyrs, but we had a wonderful sympathy in that child's dislike of that book, for we remembered one some pious soul gave us when we were about ten years old, giving the "Example of Early Piety," and the pious "Mary" died when she was six years old. I really believed, when I read the book, if she had been a wicked child she might have lived to womanhood.

There is published a class of books which help children to become Christians. I once asked a girl in her early 'teens if she ever thought about becoming a Christian. "I used to think about it when I read the Sabbath-school books. Many a time when I've read about a bright girl who was living a Christian life, such a life looked so desirable, that I have many a time laid down my book and gone to my room to pray that I might become good and true, just as God wants me to become."



But in regard to the writing of such books, it seems as though "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." If one makes a failure in writing a book for adults, he then experiments with the children! If there are people who are peculiarly adapted for the training of children, peculiarly gifted so as to interest them in conversation, so there must be living those who ought to write for them.

What young person has not been interested and spiritually helped by reading Mrs. Charles's "Schönberg Cotta Series," and her other books? "Madeline Leslie" who wrote "Tim, the Scissor's Grinder," helps and interests. Emma Leslie's books "Ayesha," "Quadratus," Flavia," "Leofwine," etc., are books which should be in every Sabbath-school library. Mrs. Prentiss's "Stepping Heavenward"—any thing but a *dull* book—has helped many a soul into the kingdom. In the Sabbath-school libraries, where are Ingraham's "Prince of the House of David," and "Throne of David," we find these among the well-worn books. T. S. Arthur's stories have given many a child a taste for reading. "Francis Forrester" and D. C. Eddy send out readable books for children. All of Dr. Holland's, with, perhaps, few exceptions, can find, with profit, a place in a Sunday-school library. Emily H. Miller interests the young, and Jennie F. Willing has sent out good work. Mrs. Henry's "Teaching," "Finding," and



"Using the Truth," though they savor strongly of the encyclopedia and of text books, yet are books which must benefit all who read. Then there are all of Abbott's Histories—over thirty volumes in all—no library for the young is complete without these. Miss Yonge's Histories should be in the libraries and in the homes where the library for the young is "yet to be."

In the home-library what girl has not found pleasure and profit by owning, and *knowing* the works of Miss Alcott, "Sophie May," Mrs. Whitney, Mrs. Stowe, and other books of the same nature, written by those who actually knew what was most enjoyed, and what was really best for the young readers of to-day?

It seems strange that so many parents think that they can not afford to buy books for their children. From a financial point, it is the most economical thing they could do. A child who has good books, and gets acquainted through them with the noble characters found there, is never content with associates of a lower standard. They gain different views of life, they have less fondness for dress and display, they love home more. Give your daughters for their friends the girls found in "Real Folks" and "Little Women," and they will cease to have a fondness for street flirtations, silly stories, and still sillier companions.



There is a mother who lives near us who purchases good books for her children, and one hour in an afternoon each week she allows her children to invite a few friends, and this mother reads to them all, and then converses about what she reads. The mother is helping her own children in thus helping her children's friends. She is helping herself by starting her own children in the right direction, and she is making her own children what they otherwise could not become, lovers of good books, and "lovers" of their mother, who denies herself for the pleasure and the good of her children.

The writing for children is one of the noblest works in the Christian world, and demands a consecrated talent. It seems a great pity that so many have taken upon themselves this work, not because they have any thing to say, not because they feel woe is me if I perform not this work, but because they are ambitious for a cheap reputation, hope to make money, or pass away time.

And the poor children! See them struggling through a pile of chaff to find one grain of wheat on which to feed. With this class of books, the trouble is not so much the positive evil which the child will find, as depraving the literary taste and spending time which could be so much better improved.



In our magazines and papers we find columns devoted to book notices, which the literary editor makes of no use to a thoughtful mind. "These books should go into every gentleman's library." "This book is an excellent Sabbath-school book." "This is a charming volume." "This is beautiful and unique." "This is full of incident." "This is a prettily bound juvenile, entitled"—and so on and on. We purchase the books. One was recommended for the Sabbath-school, because the editor saw on the 222d page a religious maxim. One is called "unique," because there is nothing like it in earth, in heaven, or in hell, and neither place would have been better if there had been. Another was recommended because the editor knew that the author had written one readable book, when probably he had written in that book all he knew and all he ever would know. And possibly such an awful thing as nepotism may have crept in to recommend a book. It is shocking to think such a thing is possible in the literary world, but it may be that the author was brother, sister, cousin, aunt, or grandmother of the literary editor.

There are some books that in the past have been recommended for Sabbath-schools which were called "Sensational Moral Stories." All alike. Boys or girls run away from home, encounter marvelous dangers, in some miraculous manner be-



come rich, get "converted," go home, fall at their parents' feet, have the fatted calf killed, fall in love, and forever and forever there is perfumed air, with beds of roses. We would label the "Oliver Optic" books of this class, and wherever they are found in a Sabbath-school, school, or home library, instead of giving them to some needy association or person, the best thing that could be made of them is to use them for kindling fire in the kitchen stove. Not long ago we took up a book a bright girl was reading, a book she said was recommended by the girls in a high-school. The heroine was of so humdrum a character, that if set in our midst, no bright girl would seek her for a friend, and for whom no one, unless it might be her own mother, could feel the least interest. Through the book runs the thread of a love for another character. Toward the close the love passages become mighty, and fall faster than leaves in Vallombrosa. A red-headed (auburn hued) boy of eighteen makes a wonderful declaration of love. The girl faints (at which we are not surprised), her parents oppose (the only sensible idea in the book), but the young couple, by the help of the ivy that "climbers over her window," and a moonlight night, rush into the world and find happiness and bliss.

We do not exaggerate in our review of this



book, but we know that it never would do for us, if we wished to be “*successful*” as a literary editor, to give so *full* a report!

The first requisite in selecting books for a library is readable books, so that a taste for reading may be cultivated. It seems a most deplorable thing for a person to come to manhood or womanhood with no fondness for reading, with no desire to seek that best society of the world, the society which has no taint of vulgarity, which shows no petty strife for power or position, which has no element of discord, and which alone is found in books.

What a loss for one never to know the blessedness of losing one's little, selfish self in some nobler life placed before one; of never forgetting, in this glorious company—the best of all ages—the fetters that bind and the boundaries that limit one's own life; of never climbing for one moment into the path and walking side by side with those who were strong in faith, in purity, in all knowledge and wisdom. Of all the sources from which we derive culture, we receive oftenest from books our highest aims, our loftiest aspirations, and truest impulses, and the one thing which we would most desire to give a child would be a love for good books.

We are glad that for the little ones some of the



best literature of the land has been published; the charming fairy stories, with the hidden meaning, which the mother has to explain; the bright bits from child-life, as found in the "Dotty Dimple" and "Prudy" story books. Such books cultivate the imagination and make a child think of original and bright things. As the children grow older the imagination no longer needs cultivation, but a good foundation for an intellectual and religious life must be laid, and a love cultivated for what is real, true, and beautiful.

Said an intellectual mother, not long ago, in speaking of her daughter, just entering her teens, for whom she had purchased all the best books of the age, which have been published for children, "I think now that my daughter ought not to read stories alone, and I intend to purchase child's histories of our own and foreign lands; and then Agnes Strickland's Queens of England and Scotland she ought to have. She now takes Margaret Fuller's books from my library. She must have books on science and art, and ancient history. O, it will not be long before she will be interested in the old Greek translations. I am a little old fashioned, but I'd like her to enjoy Bohn's Library just as I enjoyed it years ago," and this enthusiastic mother looked quite joyous over the thought of the near womanhood of her only daughter.



For the children of this age are the terrible temptations of the dime novels, the *New York Ledger*, *New York Weekly*, and trash, and worse than trash of this sort, the amount of which would astonish some parents if they knew the children read it; but what is worse, some parents spread it before their children, after having read it themselves.

Because there has been and is so much of this class of reading devoured, it makes the selection of books that will be read all the more difficult. Bring a boy up on dime novels, and how much pleasure will he take in Hamerton's "Intellectual Life," or Clark's "Mental Discipline," one leaf of either book being worth more to him than all the dime novels ever printed?

Young men seem to think it a mark of wisdom to be skeptical, and one often hears something like this: "All our great men were unbelievers." How should they know otherwise? Instead of reading the lives of Newton, Franklin, Kepler, Cuvier, Linnaeus, Hugh Miller, Agassiz, and the truly great who were Christians or believers in Christianity, they have spent their time in reading the trash we have mentioned.

What a work there is for the parents, for Sabbath and day school teachers. How fearful the result, if they fail in any portion of their labor.



There are many parents who would be glad to select good books for their children, but they do n't know how. Let them ask some one who does know. Ask the editor of the Church paper, ask some one who knows what children ought to have. The task of selecting a library for a school is not so difficult a task. The superintendent and teachers of our public schools know pretty well what books they want and need—mostly encyclopedias, dictionaries, and books of references, never story books to be taken by the pupils during term time. In the Sabbath-schools the task of selecting books is more difficult and of most importance.

In a Church which can afford it, the best way is to appoint a committee that shall read every book, rejecting all that contain any coarseness, nonsense, love stories, or wild adventures. For Churches that can not afford this, a committee of not less than five should be selected. Among this number should be a bright, intelligent mother, or teacher, who knows what the children read, and what they ought to read; the librarian, who should, like every one who occupies that position, love books and know what good books are; the pastor of the Church; and the other two on the committee the most intelligent members of the Church and most religious. If each one of the committee bring in a list of one hundred books, on compar-



ing, it will be found that the mother has brought really good stories and readable histories. The librarian has selected works of foreign travel, art, and science; the teacher excellent biographies; the minister will have fifty "memoirs," twenty-five, or more doctrinal works, several very pious tracts, some works on foreign and home missions, and "Baxter's Saints' Rest." On comparing, if three out of five competent members of the committee think the book desirable, nine times in ten it ought to go into the library.

An excellent plan by which good books could be selected for the Sabbath-school would be, in one of our large cities, to appoint a committee from the Churches of really religious and intellectual persons, whose revision and censorship of books and other publications for Sabbath-schools should be reported through prominent Sabbath-school periodicals. And when children can have access to really good books, it will be but a short time before there will be no call for that class of reading which brings destruction to soul and body.



XVIII.

The Missionary Society at  
Nortonville.

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**L**AST week I called on my friend, Mrs. Simpson, she had just returned from a trip West, where she had been with her husband. During the conversation, she mentioned having, while away, visited a Woman's Foreign Missionary society at Nortonville.

That was a subject in which I felt interested, as we were at that time soliciting for a Missionary Tea in our own society. I felt a peculiar interest in the work of any other auxiliary society, and gladly listened to all my friend had to say on the subject. With a few questions I drew from her the following interesting account of the meeting which she attended.

“There was to be an election of officers that day, and the ladies hardly knew how to manage, as it was the first election since they were organized, so they asked me to be present and help



them. You know what a good business woman I am"—and my friend looked up at me with eyes full of merriment, for she is a woman who has so little self-esteem that she really feels any attempt for her to assist others is only a farce—"and that I could n't refuse my valuable aid. But bless me! those ladies put our society all to shame.

"The town is small, and the buildings scattered, but there were fourteen women present, and nearly every one had been obliged to bring a baby, or her small children. The little ones were amused and cared for by older children in another room, so the mothers had not only an afternoon of spiritual enjoyment, but physical rest.

"The president is an elderly lady, with one of the finest faces I ever saw. A woman born in wealth, surrounded with beauty, educated at the best of Eastern schools, married unfortunately, came West, became a Christian, and perfect through suffering.

"The meeting was opened with the singing of that glorious old hymn of Watts, 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,' sung to that tune of 'Migdol' that my mother used to sing when we were little children, and I have loved ever since.

"After the singing, the president read an account in one of the Gospels about the visit, by the women, to the sepulcher on the morning of the resurrection. She then spoke of their worry,



as they walked along before reaching the sepulcher, and their fear lest they could not get the stone rolled away. She said that was just like women, to be planning ahead and borrowing trouble lest they could not succeed in their undertaking. But when they reached the place, they not only found the stone rolled away, but received the glorious tidings of a risen Lord. 'Do n't you know, sisters,' she said, 'that God is always better to us than our fears?' Besides the joy, relief, and blessedness, which these women must have felt at the glorious tidings which they received, think of the great honor bestowed upon them of being the first ones commissioned of God to bear to mortals the glad news of a risen Savior—the reward of their faithfulness to and love for Jesus. They were not only to tell the news to those who had been hoping and waiting for glad tidings, but also to poor, trembling, discouraged, heart-broken Peter. They never would have received this blessed privilege if they had not been in the way of divine influence. They came with spices to perform a work of duty and love, and because of this manifestation of love and belongedness (if there is such a word), they gained the opportunity of doing a more blessed work. I think that *we* must draw very near our Savior, must realize that he is ours and we are his, if we want him to commission us to tell the same



glad tidings to others. The result of our work, without this loving nearness to our Savior, would be as 'sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.' What little money we have to give we must send forth with prayers for God's blessing to rest upon it. What prayers we offer for the heathen we must offer in faith, and try and answer our own prayers just as far as we can. This work of ours in the mission cause is a personal work, and little by little, two cents each week, may be, we can soon make it one cent each day. I am raising now a brood of missionary chickens. If we could after awhile take a heathen child to educate into a Christian woman, I am sure we would all be glad to do that. I should like my own self to support a native Bible reader, who, at my feet, on the other side of the world, could daily help into light those who sit in heathen darkness. I am sure that we all will do what we can to hasten the glad day when all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. Let us sing that hymn of Charles Wesley's,

'See how great a flame aspires,  
Kindled by a spark of grace.'

And let us pray for faith as we sing the last verse:

'Saw ye not the cloud arise,  
Little as a human hand?  
Now it spreads along the skies,  
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land.'



Lo! the promise of a shower  
Drops already from above;  
But the Lord will shortly pour  
All the spirit of his love.'

"And again they all sang—sang with a wonderful sweetness and pathos—the hymn, to that beautiful old tune of, 'Watchman, tell us of the night.'

" 'Let us pray,' said the president, and she poured forth a prayer to one whom she seemed to feel certain would hear, help, and answer—a prayer of praise and petition. How that woman, in the little out-of-the-way town, with several little children to care for, living in the smallest of small houses, having a husband in feeble health, earning a precarious living—how that woman thanked God for her blessings!

" 'Not a thing makes my life more blessed than that of the heathen, only what the Gospel of Jesus Christ has brought me,' she exclaimed, and how she prayed that she might never dole her duties out to God; prayed that she might *ever* have in mind his wondrous love to her; that she might show her love to him by keeping his commandments, and show her gratitude by works of sacrifice and in labors of love.

"Then another offered prayer, and another, and another. With what faith these women prayed for the spread of the Gospel, not only in foreign



lands, but here at our own doors. With what earnestness they pleaded for the heathen, and how they cried for help and sustaining grace for the missionary in foreign lands, away from home and friends. These women are downright in earnest in their work. There is no dilettanteism here. They are not doing for the sake of the name or the reward.

“After the devotional exercises came the roll-call—*every member present!* Then the report of the last meeting, and a report that brought vividly to mind all the good things said and done, as well as the business transacted. A full report from the treasurer, and a book shown that would do credit to a bank clerk. A report from the corresponding secretary, and new leaflets to distribute. In the miscellaneous business came the exchanging of books and papers, and the reading. Not all can afford to take the *Heathen Woman's Friend*, but those who can take it loan it at this time to those who can not. Not all can take the *Advocate*, but those who do have it, bring here the back numbers and loan to others, the old ones being now returned and sewed together for future reference. With other papers and some books they had, it was the same. Many of the papers were marked at especially enjoyable or readable articles. Some had a bit to read, making running comments as



they read. One lady had brought an interesting account of the work of a missionary at Hilo, on the Hawaii Island, which she had found in a paper sent her by her husband's mother. It was an account of a wonderful work—a marvelous display of God's grace—and it made a great impression on me.

“The missionary who first went there in 1835, has just died—an old man. In three months he learned the language, and the first year went around the island—three hundred miles—in a canoe, finding all the settlements on the island. It was a wonderful place to live. Volcanic fires were never invisible. At one time a volcano sent up for three weeks a pillar of fire one thousand feet in the air. The sea came in with tidal waves that swept all before it. A river of fire, of hot lava, burrowed its way one thousand five hundred feet below the surface to the sea, leaping from the cliff into the hissing waves.

“ ‘Could n't these people understand about Mt. Sinai, and the terrors of the Lord?’

“Multitudes flocked to hear the man preach, and he found himself often straitened for time to eat and sleep. One time he was obliged to preach three times before breakfast. The people followed him from place to place, and stopped him by the wayside to hear about Jesus.

“Two years after he first went there he had



fifteen thousand people, up and down the coast, for hundreds of miles, hungry for the bread of life. He had one assistant, who had also to care for a school; and there was besides only his own wife and the wife of his assistant—four Christian teachers for all these people. The people at last got so interested in the subject that they left their homes and camped near Hilo, until the little village of ten hundred became a place of ten thousand, and this man had a daily congregation of from three thousand to six thousand. The entrance of the Word gave light in every way. The people who were low, brutal, sensual, lazy, had been cannibals, were the vilest of the vile, became industrious, teachable, kind, and orderly. A Sabbath quiet reigned, and from the booths at dawn and nightfall was heard the voice of prayer and praise.

“They had two churches, the old and the new, six thousand in one and three thousand in the other. The people sat on the ground as closely as they could sit. To move from the room one would have to walk over them, he could not walk among them.

“The songs are rude and inharmonious, but the attempt is honest, and God accepts it as praise. Prayer is offered, and then the sermon is given. The theme is, ‘You are sinners, great sinners,



dead in trespasses and sins ; Christ died to save you. Submit your hearts to God ; believe in Christ, and you shall live.' The whole audience tremble and weep, and many cry aloud for mercy.

“ The missionary says he preached as plain and simple as he could. Applied the text by illustrations which all could understand. He tried not to excite them ; told them it was not tears but a new heart and a new life God wanted. And they did lead new lives. The lazy began to work ; thousands broke their pipes and gave up tobacco ; drunkards stopped drinking ; adulteries ceased, and murderers confessed their crimes.

“ The missionary described a scene one evening, just at time of evening prayer, of the rising of the sea. The sea, by an unseen hand, had suddenly risen into a gigantic wave, and rushed in with the rapidity of a race-horse, and falling upon the shore, sweeping every thing before it—men, women, children, houses, canoes, food, clothing, every thing, floated out upon the wild waves—as sudden and as unexpected as lightning from a clear sky. In a moment, hundreds of people were struggling in the waters, and some were carried out to sea, to rise no more till the judgment day.

“ He speaks of the conversion of a high-priest and priestess of Pele. A man whose pastime was murder and robbery. His word was law. Indeed,



he had only to look and point, and a poor native was strangled to appease the wrath of their god. At last he crept to the meetings, and the truth entered his heart. He came confessing his sins, and desired to turn from them. 'I have lived in darkness, and did not know the true God. I worshiped what was no god. I renounce it all. The true God has come. He speaks. I bow to him. I want to be his child.' His sister came also. The change in them was wonderful. The sister stayed to be taught. They were very old, and soon after died in great peace.

"This minister, to visit his people in the northern part of his parish, crossed sixty-three ravines, from twenty to a thousand feet deep. In many of them the banks are steep, and can be descended only by letting one's self down from crag to crag by the hands. In many places he was obliged to wind his way along the sides of a giddy steep, where one step of four inches from the track would plunge him into the fearful depth below.

"His least weekly number of sermons was six or seven, and the greatest twenty-five or thirty. Often traveling in drenching rains, crossing rapid and dangerous streams, climbing slippery and beetling precipices, preaching in the open air, and sometimes in wind and rain, with every garment saturated with water.



"But I am making the account too long," said my friend, for I had my eyes closed, and was following the missionary step by step in his wonderful work, and I must have *looked* a very uninterested hearer.

"No; go on, go on—let me hear the end," I said hastily.

"There is but little more in words. This wonderful man, Mr. Coan, cared for the children and for his people individually, better than many a minister with a city parish.

"He made them all help him by setting them at work caring for and looking after others. Some of the native helpers were men full of faith and the Holy Ghost. He sent them out, two by two, to preach the Gospel in every village and hamlet. They climbed mountains, traversed forests, and explored glens, searching for the dying people of Hawaii. They prayed in every house; they looked after the sick, the wretched, and the friendless; stirred up the minds of the converts, and gathered in the children. The Spirit of the Lord fell upon them all.

"Many of the natives were wonderfully gifted in prayer. They took God at his word, and with a simple and child-like faith, unspoiled by tradition or vain philosophy, they went with boldness to the throne of grace.



“The missionary said he had often felt like hiding his face in the dust, when he witnessed their earnest wrestlings, and had seen how like princes they have had power with God, and have prevailed. With tears, with soul-melting fervor, and with that earnest importunity which takes no denial, they would plead the promises and receive what appeared to be the most direct and unequivocal answers to their prayers.

“In the years 1838 and 1839 there were seven or eight thousand natives who had professed conversion, but very few of them had been received into the Church. The utmost care was taken in selecting, examining, watching, and teaching the candidates. The accepted ones stood propounded for several weeks, and the Church and the world, friends and enemies, were called upon and solemnly charged to testify if they knew aught against any of the candidates.

“The communion seasons were held quarterly, and at these times these converts, thus carefully sifted, were added to the Church. The first Sabbath in January, 1838, 104 were received. Afterward, at different times, 502, 450, 786, 357, and on one occasion even a much larger number.

“The first Sabbath in July, that same year, was the day of the greatest accession. On that afternoon, 1705 men, women, and children who



had been heathen were baptized, and took upon them the vows of God, and about 2,400 communicants sat down to the Lord's Supper.

“After the morning sermon, the crowd had been dismissed. The fifty original members of the Church were seated down the middle of the church. The missionary then called upon the head man of each village to bring forward his people. With note-book in hand, he carefully selects the converts who have been previously accepted. They have been for many weeks at the station. No pains were spared, no test left unused with each, to make sure if he were a child of God.

“The multitude of candidates are seated on the earth floor, in close rows, with space enough to walk between. There is prayer and singing, and explanation—made many and many times before—of the baptism they are about to receive. Then, with a basin of water in his hand, rapidly, reverently, he passes back and forth along the silent rows, and every head receives the sealing ordinance. When all—nearly two thousand—have been baptized, the missionary advances to the front, and, raising his hands, pronounces the solemn and hallowed words: ‘I baptize you all into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’ ‘I never witnessed such a scene,’ said the missionary. ‘There was a hush on the vast crowd without,



who were pressing about the doors and windows. The candidates and the Church were all in tears, and the overshadowing presence of God was felt in every heart.'

"The lady who read this to the society was one of the best readers I ever heard; rapid, but distinct, and she read as though she saw the very scenes she was describing.

"After the reading there was a few minutes' talk about the subject; maps brought out, the place located, the figures and statements recapitulated, and all carried with them the facts mentioned in the article.

"Then the president said that, as it was the day for the election of officers, they would proceed to that business. As she understood very little about parliamentary rules, she was afraid that the business would not be done according to Cushing, and wanted that I should take the chair.

"Why, do you know," said Mrs. Simpson, "that I never felt so insignificant in my life? Why, I could sit at the feet of these women and be taught by them for years. They lived and walked with God, and his glory shone round about them.

"After I declined, the president sat a few minutes in silence. 'We know where to get wisdom, sisters,' she said, and down on their knees they



all bowed. She pleaded the promise as she would have done to a loving mother, and seemed never to doubt that just the needed help would be gained. She asked that the right officers might be chosen; those who would lead them on to greater usefulness; that the coming year might be the best they had ever known; that God would direct them then and there in the needs of that very hour, so that all that they might say and do would be for his honor and his glory.

“After the prayer, she said she thought the best way to elect the officers would be by ballot, then each one could express herself freely, and no one take offense. ‘The secretary may prepare, distribute, and collect the ballots, and the ladies may first vote for president, not considering me a candidate for the office.’

“‘Would you serve, if elected?’ asked one.

“‘Certainly, I’d do the best I could, but there are others here who could do better than I. Say your little prayer before you vote. We tell our husbands to vote as they pray. We will pray as we vote—both at the same time.’

“When the ballots were collected, they were unanimous for her.

“‘Thank you,’ she said, with tears in her eyes. ‘I am so glad that you are not wholly discouraged with me, after seeing the failures and mistakes of



the last year. The next will be for the vice-presidents. We have three; and to their duty as vice-presidents is added the work of a literary committee, and also the ones to plan for socials, prayer-meetings, and missionary teas. We will elect them one by one.'

"The vice-presidents were speedily elected.

" 'The recording secretary, on whom devolves the giving notice of the meetings, keeping the records—making each report as interesting as possible, the notifying members when extra duties are required of them, and in numberless ways holding up the hands of the president—you may now elect.'

"This was also quickly done, the votes being tossed into the president's lap for her to count.

" 'The treasurer, who carries the burden of the financial part of our society, collects the dues, keeps a correct book-account of all moneys taken and expended, reporting at each meeting, reporting quarterly to the branch treasurer. For our treasurer, whoever she may be,' said the president, 'I hope you will pray earnestly. The success of our society financially depends on her.'

"The treasurer was re-elected, as was the corresponding secretary, one of the most important officers of the society.

" 'Let us close with prayer, and the singing of 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'



“After the close of the meeting, the ladies spent a little time socially, then all went out to tea. Each lady, when she came, brought a little lunch of bread and butter, a piece of cake, or cheese, or cold meat, or can of fruit. Each brought her own plate, napkin, fork, and spoon. The tea, the cups, the cream, and the sugar, alone were provided by the hostess.

“The husbands could not come, but the ladies and children went home rested and refreshed.


“But,” said my friend, “the tea, necessary as it seemed to be, was not the least enjoyable or the thing least to be commended at this very pleasant and profitable missionary meeting at Nortonville.”



## XIX.

### The Kingdom Within.

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HEN I was visiting my friend Alcestis, a few months ago, one morning Mrs. Brown, her next neighbor, came in to inquire how to make "mixed pickles."

As she went out, she glanced around the sunny room, and exclaimed, "More sweet than sour pickles in your life, I think."

"Did you ever think what sort of a 'chow-chow' a woman's life is?" I asked, after Mrs. Brown had left. "It seems to me, sometimes, as though at the creation of woman there was some mistake. She, only a rib, and yet have to fill so many positions, when *all* the ribs which were left need do only one thing in life—and take his choice at that. Personally, I do n't complain, because I am a woman; I do n't feel as though I was called upon in any way to alter woman's position. I accept things as they are, firmly believing woman should fill the place for which she was created. But, after all, I do feel sorry for some



women who do n't seem to find the niche where they belong. And I suppose, for that matter, that there are men who have made mistakes, but they are strong enough to take care of themselves, and do n't go whining round for sympathy from women, thank fortune, so we remain in ignorance of their mistakes. Every woman who has a home, whether she has any taste for it or not, must be a good housekeeper if she expects peace in this world. To train her children properly, and to be a real helpmeet to her Adam, she must be intellectual. And, as her soul is of more importance than the things of this world, she must be a religious woman. Why! her life is more mixed than Joseph's coat. I wonder if the mistake made—if there was a mistake—was not in the not taking another rib and making one rib into the body and the other into the soul and brain! What do you put into this mixture called 'life,' Alcestis, to make it palatable?"

"Hamerton says that 'the essence of intellectual living is not in the extent of science, or in the perfection of expression, but is more the condition of mind that seeks the highest, than the accomplishment.' If that is true of the intellectual life, it is also true of the spiritual life in its degree," said Alcestis, after a moment's silence. "This is what makes life so comfortable a thing



to me. I am glad that God has revealed to us the manner of making the bitter fountain sweet.

“Yes, life is a strange thing,” she continued, musingly, “especially our lives—the life of woman. So much of our work the greatest and grandest, and so much the smallest and meanest. We can, and often do, go from the seventh heaven, where we are enjoying an intellectual or a spiritual feast, to the lowest depth of care, anxiety, or actual servitude. Sour bread, over-done roast, a sponge cake that has a particular fondness for the bottom of the cake-dish; the making the clothes last; the wondering how to turn this garment upside down and wrong side out, and have it look as good as new; the contriving ways and means to procure a new carpet for the one already worn out; new table linen; new blankets for the beds and new boots for the children; the striving to keep a saintly character when the back aches from a hard day’s work over the ironing-table, wash-tub, or molding-board. Yes, *care, anxiety, and servants’ labor*. We also train immortal souls—more valuable than an archangel’s—supposing they have souls. Alas! that we do our greatest work often more heedlessly than our most insignificant. Yes, we wear ourselves out for the things which avail but little, when we ought to save our strength for



nobler work," and she glanced at a dress I was elaborately trimming for my baby.

"Go on," I said, with a smile, "I like your sermons, for you do manage to sugar-coat the pill, and that is more than I can say of all I have heard in this life of mine."

"Well, to illustrate!" and Alcestis painted a solemn-looking owl, that Minerva herself would not disdain to own, with a few strokes of her brush on the unpainted canvas on the easel before her. "This morning I was earnestly talking to Admetus about a remark made by our pastor at an evening meeting, concerning 'the kingdom of heaven within you,' when he interrupted me with, 'I do wish you'd hurry Jane. She hasn't the coffee over yet.' You would have called that '*mixed*,' but I could speak to Jane and not lose the influence of what had been said before he suggested hurrying her tardy steps. After breakfast, when he gave the usual good-bye kiss, with the same breath he asked if he should bring a sirloin steak for dinner. This manner of living used to seem absurd to me; to mix our theology and coffee, our human love and the meat that perisheth.

"When I was first married I kept up the habits I had in my father's home, in regard to hours of private devotion, self-examination, and religious public services. I took my hour each day for the



study of my Bible, meditation, and prayer; then I labeled my religion, laid it by to be brought out as a sort of feast the next day at the same hour. My peace, my joy, and my comfort were the things I cared about more than I did my Savior. These things were too sacred to talk about, too sacred for constant use. Religion, God, heaven, and eternity should not be spoken of except on the Sabbath, and then mostly in church, and by the minister when in the pulpit."

Here my friend ceased speaking for a little while, and I worked busily, sewing lace on ruffles, and ruffles on the dress. At last Alcestis suddenly said, again turning to me, and sticking her brush in her hair, "If you had obtained a most precious jewel, one that gave you constant satisfaction as you wore it, and you knew where your friends could each have such a priceless treasure, would you think much about it? Would you ever speak of it? If your elder brother was away preparing a glorious mansion for you, to be just as beautiful as you yourself would be capable of adorning and being mistress of, how would you conduct yourself in regard to it? Would there be a minute in the day when you would not be, either purposely or insensibly, preparing yourself to adorn and inhabit the place being prepared? If you knew your friends could have just such a home,



would you ever speak of the fact to them? Would you talk over these things with your husband and your children?"

"You do put things in such a matter-of-fact light," I said. "But what if you were in Mrs. Brown's shoes, instead of your own? I do n't wonder she thought of sweet and sour pickles when she compared your life with her life. Suppose you had four children to clothe and for whom to care, and hardly knew from where the next cent was coming; health not very good; your own work to do, clear down to the washing, ironing, scrubbing floors, and washing windows. I wonder if you could take things as coolly, and mix religion with your bread and molasses for breakfast, your beef-bone soup for dinner, and with your molasses and bread for supper! As for myself, comfortable as I have things, I can't get time to think much about these subjects, except on Sunday and Thanksgiving;" and I felt a little cross and a trifle envious that this friend should seem to sail to glory on flowery beds of ease, while I was plodding along on foot, with not even the certainty of getting there at last. "Not that I ought to complain," I added, as I thought of my own blessings, "but I *do* have so much to do. A large house to care for, never free from company or callers. Of course, I like it, but then the time goes, all the same—the



prayer-meetings, class-meetings, and Church services to attend; the children to see to (and they alone never would give me a minute to myself), and, half the time, incompetent help."

"I hope you do not think that your children are too great a burden, and must be hindrances in your divine life," and Alcestis's voice faltered, and I could have bitten off my tongue because I had not thought sooner of the little graves near her old home, thousands of miles away.

After a little she said, in a voice as sad as a far-off strain of dirge-like music, "Christ gives us each our cross, and if there had been any way to lead us into the mansion prepared, except by suffering, surely Christ would not have led us all by the same road he himself trod before us. And shall we seek to be above our Lord? There is always a cross for us to carry—sometimes unseen by the world, but one which our great Burden-bearer knows all about, and which he so gladly helps us carry. He loves us too well to cause us needless trials, and if we will bear our cross cheerfully, it will soon bear us. And about 'mixing our religion with our breakfast and dinner,' let me tell you, 'Martha,' that is the way to live."

Alcestis touched a bit of foliage with burnt umber, and, shading another bit with a dab of



Indian red, turned from her easel again, and, using her brush to mark her emphasis, looking me in the face, said, "You know, 'Martha,' that you do n't get any sweetness out of your religion. You have only enough to make you uncomfortable. Why not give up trying to live this way, and come so near your Savior that you will *constantly* live in the light of his countenance, and have an inner sympathy with God's will, which will give a constant peace which the cares of this world can never disturb? You open your eyes at the idea of the kingdom of God within you! You can't, of course, enjoy it, if you do not realize it is there. Now, if you only could realize that this could be, that Christ is a personal Savior—make heaven so real a place that it would be only an open door between you and eternity—you'd begin to *enjoy* religion. You actually do not 'enjoy' it now; 't is too good, like an elegant dress or hat which one can hardly afford, and can not take real comfort in. I wish, my dear, that you would pray over this. Prayer is the key which unlocks God's storehouse.

"Our Father has shown you," she went on, what there is laid up for you—beyond any thing of which you can conceive. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard of the glory that awaits you even in this life, and you know how to get the treasures. Last



Wednesday evening we were singing in prayer-meeting—do you remember?—

‘Prone to wander, Lord I feel it;  
Prone to leave the God I love,’

and I thought to myself then, what a shameful confession that was for us, as lovers of God, to make. If we do actually love him who sought and rescued us by his own precious blood, why do we wander, or leave him?”

“’Tis rather a dirge-like song for the ears of the Bridegroom, I confess, and the thought that we are apt to do this often puzzles me,” I replied. “A child does not wander from parents, a lover does not leave his beloved—his heart clings to her without wavering or doubt. And I, too, was wondering, when we sang, if God was pleased with us when we had this feeling of wandering from him. I do really wish, Alcestis, that I was rooted and grounded in him. I confess I get but little time to think about these things—or, I suppose you would have me state it more correctly—I *take* but little time—but when I do think of my religious experience, I have a feeling of profound disgust for myself. I distinctly remember when I first heard about intermittent springs—it was in a little philosophy I studied when I was seven years old—those springs connected by siphons with reservoirs in the mountains, and I remember the surprise I



felt that such things were. But, somehow, I do n't feel half as much astonishment when I think about that 'spring' which can always spring forth in every believer's heart, and then see how we, instead of having that perpetual supply, draw from the reservoir of God's grace in a sort of siphonal manner—not exactly the same, either, for we bend the tube to suit our own feelings—and have our peace intermittent, and our hope and our comfort in the same uncertain sort of a way. Sometimes, when nothing troubles me, I rest in God; but, when the cares and trials and perplexities come in like a flood, I look for the light-house of faith, that I could plainly see in the fair weather, and to my dismay the lamp burns so dimly that, before I know it I am on the rocks, and the waters overwhelm me. I am ashamed to confess this."

"But you need not be," replied Alcestis. "I know so many women who are professing Christians, who know that Jesus is their friend, their helper, their burden-bearer, if they would only let him care for them in the way he is glad to help, but they continue to carry their own burdens, bow their hearts down beneath their loads, and instead of saying, 'Dear Jesus, take my care, take my sorrow, take my sin, and give me rest,' they cry out, 'O Lord, how long?'"

"I remember so well how I used to stagger



along, weary and heavy laden, but still persisting in carrying my own load. I used to try to place my cares on him, have gone to him with my sorrow, have asked relief from my burdens, and yet risen from my knees with the same worried and unhappy heart that I had when I bowed before him. Often, when perplexed and troubled with cares, have I asked the Lord to show me the way, to lead me, to carry my load, and at the close of my petition felt just as burdened and bewildered as ever. If your child was wandering from the direction she wanted to go, would she not ask your help? Would you not feel like saying, 'My dear little one, I know that you are troubled and tired; let me take your bundle, heavy for you but light for me, and I shall be glad to show you the way. Even more, my dear child, let me carry you and your burden.'

"We can not imagine a weary little child who would not be glad to rest in her mother's arms, content the mother should care for her and all her little burdens. Neither can we imagine one who is heartily sick and tired of wandering, and of its burden, who, when the mother offered help, would turn from her and go her own way. When we, as Christians, do this with the Lord; when we turn from his proffered help, then no wonder we sing,

'Prone to wander.'



“Years ago, when I first became a Christian, there came to me a great trouble. I tried to cast my burden upon the Lord. I honestly tried the best I knew how, but my burden remained, and I became so perplexed that I nearly lost faith in God. I thought that because he did not immediately answer, and answer in the way I wanted my petition answered, that he would not hear my cry, and in my own strength I carried the burden, and it failed to work out for me the great good which I doubt not my Father intended for me. To-day, as I look back, I am pained because I see what I have lost by not earlier knowing the only sure refuge in time of trouble.”

“Rutherford says, ‘Sanctification and the mortification of our lusts are the hardest part of Christianity,’” I said, as my friend began to wipe her brushes, and I feared lest she would say no more on the subject, in which she had created a deep interest in my heart. “How many of us would have Christ divided into two halves, that we might take the half of him only, and take his office—Jesus and salvation? But ‘Lord’ is a cumbersome word, and to obey and work out our salvation and perfect holiness is the cumbersome and stormy north side of Christ, and that which we eschew and shift.”

“Yes,” said Alcestis, “we do forget that all



growth is the more valuable according to the difficulties surmounted. There is a tribe of savages who believe that the power of the conquered enemy passes into the conqueror. Is n't that theory actually true with us in regard to the physical, moral, and spiritual life? The physical nature that has not found ease and luxury grows strong in the battle for life. The moral nature that is firm and unwavering when passing through temptations, can, in subsequent life, pass through similar scenes and find no temptation at all. The intellectual part of our being, if rightly trained, will gain more by overcoming than by receiving, and the difficulties always act as a tonic. But in our spiritual nature we shrink from the knowledge that we must *endure* in order to take steps upward."

After a minute of silence Alcestis continued, "It is hard for us to keep sight of God in a storm, and I know only too well how the waters come in over us. But we must listen for the voice beyond the storm. If we can catch the faintest sound of that voice, if only the odor of the music of the far-off tones reach us, should we not be still more anxious to keep from the sea of our own desires safe in God's blessed will? The trouble with most of us is, that we *will not* realize what we lack; we *will not* grow restless because we are cold and indifferent. We encourage ourselves by thinking



that we are living about right ; that we are a little more saintly than the Church members in the pews around us ; that our lives are better than they were a few years ago. By comparing ourselves with ourselves we grow satisfied, fold our hands, and say, 'a little more slumber.'

"There is no realization of our needs ; there is no hungering after righteousness," continued my friend, with earnestness ; "and, worse than all, we do not *want* the hunger, we do not want a spiritual impatience. We know that we are not living as we ought. Like a good old sister I once knew, we in our hearts feel what she said, week after week, 'I am not enjoying that religion which it is my duty and my privilege to enjoy, but my face is set as a flint Zionward,' and we propose to remain in that position.

"Imagine a man starting from here to go to a town twenty miles south of us, with his horses and carriage, on a very muddy day in early Spring. When part way there his horses plunge into mud beyond their depth, flounder there for a time, pull the man along a few feet, and then stick fast. A friend goes by after a while, and cries out, 'Why! how is this? Why do you sit there so quietly? Waiting for the mud to dry up? Why do you not make some effort to save yourself?' What should you think of the man if he replied,



‘O, I do n’t feel particularly anxious about my condition. I know that I am not progressing as I ought, but still I feel that I am established. My face is set as a flint toward the town to which I am going?’”

“If we want Christ to help us we must help ourselves,” I replied to her questioning look. “I know that I am not more logical, at times, than the man in the mud. But, some way—though I know it is the thing to do—I have not learned, when I carry my burdens to Christ, to leave them there. I suppose I ought to take them back if I find I have taken them away with me when I leave the mercy-seat. And I know, also, that when I will allow Christ to undertake for me, that he can do that without any anxiety on my part; that there is no need for me to have a heart full of anxiety and care. I know one thing, and that is, if I could only think to carry the little things—the *little* trials of life—to God, and feel as though he cared for me just as he cares for the sparrow, it would give me great comfort, and tend to keep me nearer to him.”

“Do you remember the lady who was in here last week, who you thought had such a beautiful face?” asked my friend. “She used to sew for me before she was married. She is a quiet, intelligent woman, and a member of the Episcopal



Church. We were talking of these things one day when she was helping me, and I inquired why she became a seamstress. Her reply was: 'My health was failing, our home was to be broken up, and I was very anxious about the future. I carried my anxiety to the Lord; I have no other refuge. I told him that I was burdened, and that I did not know what to do. I had thought that perhaps I could earn a livelihood with my needle, but I had not the courage to say so to any one. But I left my care with our Father. In a few weeks a lady who was going East, and had a great deal to do, a member of my own Church, and one of the best of women, came and asked me, in a diffident sort of way, if I would come and help her with her sewing. I considered it a direct answer to my prayer. I went, and since that time, though I have not asked for work, I have had all that I could do, and I have no fears for the future. I seldom speak of this, yet I do not fear to do so to you, knowing that you will understand that I wish to give God all the glory.'

"O, Martha! I am glad that you *do* want more of God's love in your heart," continued Alcestis, after telling the experience of her friend, and finding I made no reply. "I am glad that you are tired of groping in the dark; that you want to fall with your burden upon 'the great



world's altar stairs, that slope through darkness up to God;' and instead of stretching 'lame hands of faith, to grope and gather dust and chaff,' you want to reach forth and grasp the precious truth, and *firmly* trust yourself in the care of him who says, 'Let not your heart be troubled'—'troubled' about the food or the raiment, the home, society, the Church, or the lesser cares and perplexities of life. We each know our own burdens, but to each our Savior says, 'Let not your heart be troubled, I will undertake for you.'

"Just think of it, Martha, freedom from care! What a blessed thought for a tired mother and home-keeper. If you only can learn to take *all* your cares, spiritual and temporal, to God, there will come a peace which passeth all understanding, and when we resign all to him the joy comes."

"O, Alcestis, do you suppose I could so live as to get rid of this contempt for myself which I feel when I think how weak I am?" I exclaimed, impetuously.

When I went to my home, the next day, I took Alcestis's words with me. When I lay aside the book of which I am so fond, and take work from the stocking-basket, or pick up the dish-cloth, I try to realize that this is the work given me, and by mixing dish-water and hymns, mending and prayers, I get now and then a taste of the



feast which I enjoyed at my hours of devotion in the years gone by. I often get discouraged, and wish that heaven would fall into my lap, instead of my reaching for only a piece at a time, but I am pressing on, and trying to do now what I must do even at heaven's gate, borrow strength from Christ. And I am glad at the thought that, though I can not in this life separate Christ and his cross, yet they will part company at the door of the mansion over beyond; and in that mansion which he has prepared will never enter sorrow, sighing, or pain; and, instead of 'the kingdom within'—O, joyful thought!—it will be within the kingdom.



## XX.

### The Next Duty.

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THE old year has passed and the new has fairly begun. We look back and we look forward. We look back on imperfection, and we look forward to perfection. That is, it will be perfection, if we can judge by good resolutions. If it was not so very sad, it would strike one as absurd to see this difference between anticipatory saintliness and retrospective badness. And to think that we go on, year after year, making resolutions by wholesale on the birthdays and the year's birthday, and that the results are so meager.

We look back to the days when we were young enough to write in our diary of January 1st the resolutions we intended to carry out through the year. "Rise in the morning at the first breakfast bell;" "Not to read any more novels;" "Speak pleasantly to people I don't like;" "Not to whisper any more to Charlie Bowers, who sits across the aisle," and several more, making the string as long as Dr. Edwards's "Rules for holy living."



How much better than that are we doing now? Of course, we all well remember how many days we kept our good resolutions. Now, we resolve, "We will live a better life this year than we did last." But how? It is not one grace but a cluster of graces, perfect and mature, that makes the Christian character. It is not doing a few things better, but doing *all* our duties the best we can—not only doing them the best we can, but doing them cheerfully.

At a political meeting an Englishman was asked why he was late. "I stopped to see a volunteer dragged to duty," was his reply.

The Master has a battle for us to fight, and we are volunteers in his great army, but how often does the world get a chance to stand by and see us "dragged to duty?"

But some woman will say, "In this Iliad, where the world is a battle-plain, *our* part is to stand on the walls and watch, only fighting the battle in our own hearts."

Is that all there is for us to do?

A saint asked, "What if Christ have another written representation of me than I have of myself? Where am I then?"

Our *acts* often look to us to be about right; do we ever stop to analyze the motive? Do we ever think how often this is all wrong? Often duty is



performed from the effect of some unseen or unthought of force, which pushes us forward to action. There is recorded of us, not only the wrong motive, but the work left undone, as well as the wrong acts. We forget that simply ceasing to do wrong is not enough.

Last Sabbath we went to Church—to worship God? or because we had a new hat, a new imported cloak, or because the Spangenberg's are visiting the Lincolns? Sometimes we go because we have a class in Sabbath-school which meets just before or after service, and we “might as well go to both while we are dressed.” Sometimes the choir needs us. Sometimes “because it’s habit.” *Sometimes* because we are hungry for the Word, and hope there to find the hidden manna. That is, *sometimes* because we want to learn how to fight the battles of the Lord, and sometimes by the unseen force.

From a Church membership of two hundred, we find ten, fifteen, possibly twenty, at the weekly prayer-meeting. The world looks at the one hundred and eighty, and in a tone of sarcasm says, “*Volunteers!*”

Are those who go true volunteers? Are they not sometimes dragged thither by habit, by an opportunity to sing, to speak; to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the Church—that is, to mourn



over those who are not as holy as themselves; because it is expected of them; because they want somewhere to go; or, because the husband, wife, father, or child, asks them for company?

Do we all and always go because we need spiritual help? Because we are hungry, and need a morsel between the feasts? Because our armor needs repair? Do we realize that our sword is rusty? That the shield has moved up to the shoulder-blade, and does not avail when the enemy comes?

If we live up to our good resolutions, is that sufficient, no matter what the motive?

Sometimes we think we can take a choice of duties, when we have only buried our talent deep in the pit, and sit beside it watching, because we dread to face the criticism of the unjust world.

We did not go to see Margaret Jones when she was sick of sin. We were afraid that our white garments would be soiled by a touch of her hands, and we were needed elsewhere just then, which "almost seemed providential." "You know" if we had gone, that our influence for good might have been lessened.

"O, yes, we want to help souls to Christ, but—but—well, really, we have no tact to go out 'into the highways and hedges,' and might do more harm than good. Then, you know, our motives



might be misconstrued. Really, *that* is not *my* duty."

How strange that we can ever forget that Christ's "*Well done!*" is worth more than all earth besides.

Ah! how easy to deceive ourselves; to fold our hands and bid heaven come to us.

There are many who are sick. We can call on bright Mrs. Garnet, or dear Mrs. Pearl, but what *can* drag us to call on Mrs. Gosling, who snuffles, wipes her nose on her apron, and pours forth her grievances so fast that we have no opportunity to say any of those beautiful things which we had thought over for her especial benefit?

Why are we always expecting and hoping that the way over life's battle-field will be pleasant? Instead of looking for the *pleasant* things to do, why not look more earnestly for the right ones?

And why are we so apt to forget that the way is growing constantly shorter? "Over beyond," to-day, is not as far as it was yesterday. Soon, how soon! it will be only a step; only a reaching out to obtain the crown that awaits the faithful. Need we falter? Can we not patiently and joyfully press on in the path His feet have trod? If we do this, the way grows pleasanter as we near the other side. And, as we go, let us take with us, if we can, all of God's little ones—the poor, the



simple, the erring, the outcasts. These were his special care. Are we above our Captain? Shall we stand on the wall and see the victorious army of Satan and his hosts crowding forward; see the soldiers in the army in which we have enlisted fall; see the banner sometimes waver; and, for fear it is "woman's only place to watch," never go to help our great Leader? We hear the cry of the sore pressed—how quickly a sympathizing woman hears this cry; we know the tempted—with woman's sure instincts; we see the wounded; and who knows how better to care for them than we?—and we hear the groans of the dying.

When our Captain passed over this field, he listened to the faintest sound of distress; he encouraged the faltering; he gave cooling draughts to the thirsty; he brought relief to the weary, the sad, the oppressed. Can we not *love* the way he himself trod? Can we not do the work given us to do, when he chose for us our battle-field, and has provided for us the armor and the weapons?

Look up, sister! Recognize his banner, on which is emblazoned LOVE, in shining letters, and let us no more be dragged to duty, but press forward, cheerfully taking for his sake the duty that is next before us.

If we *would*, we *can not* reach heaven by simply saying, "Lord! Lord!" It is not at the next



door; the battle-field lies between us and the eternal home, and wishing, longing, resolving, really does not help us along on the journey. Regrets for the past and good resolutions for the future do not, in reality, help us in the least. Or, the wishing that we could put brakes on the wheels of time, and stop long enough to rest, to gather courage for new work, or to undo what we have already done, avails nothing.

Alas! that we all must have this keen sense of regret over the work done, or the work left undone.

One year ago we all made plans for mental improvement, for greater culture, for deeper searching into the hidden mysteries, for gaining greater knowledge of the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of the wondrous gift; we resolved to live more consecrated to the work given us as Christians, to make life more unselfish. But we have failed, in a great measure, because we let little duties slip from our grasp uncared for and unnoticed. Our motives may have been of the best, and we would cheerfully have done any work which looked to us to be duty, but we really did not see the work.

We ask ourselves, as we look over a year that is past, "Are we better to-day than we were one year ago?" And we are mute. Who is better be-



cause we lived the past year? We answer with a sigh. What books have we read that contributed to our mental and spiritual growth? Did the year in the past help us *well* along over the battle-field, or did we only go on thinking mostly of our own burdens, wounds, and heart-aches? Is the Church any better because we belonged to it during a year just gone into eternity? Did we cheerfully give for its support? Did our presence cheer in the prayer-meeting? Have we used our talent in the Sabbath-school? Have we been interested in the great work women are doing for the evangelization of women in heathen lands, and have we done *all* we could have done in this direction? Have we freely given to Jesus of our learning, our time, our position, our intellectual store, our wealth, our talent?

Yes, we know "the battle-field is not pleasant." We all know that when Christ called us, he called us to a life of toil, not to one of rest, and it must be, "Give, or it will not be given unto you;" "Give, and it *shall* be given unto you." It is, Bring and receive. God's storehouse is full, but we have no claims if we come empty handed. If we come, bringing the sacrifice, we shall go away with the soul full and running over.

God wants us to do this. He expects us to be fruitful in knowledge, faith, and obedience. The



wisdom and faith are God's gifts, the *obedience* is *our* work. It is we and the Lord. He does the larger share, but he has left a share for us to do.

So often, when we hear Christians singing in plaintive tones,

“Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?”

we think of what they themselves were doing for their Master. Their hearts, at the first, had just been filled with the wisdom and the faith for which they had earnestly sought, and that made obedience easy. The “blessedness” always comes where there is obedience. When the tithes are gladly brought in, when duty is found and cheerfully done, the blessing is always poured out. Why they mourn is, because yesterday's supply was not great enough to last over till to day. When they began to “drag” themselves to duty, the “blessedness” came not.

We can not live in a state of “blessedness” unless we do the duties as they come along. The heart is full, and we sing, actually feeling the words of the hymn as if it had been first expressed by us.

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”



But if just then the missionary box comes—the fall in stocks—bad debts, limited salary, the failure of the corn crop, prospect of grasshoppers, the depression of the market, the cost of the family, all the forboding evils which the head of the family always shares with “poor, weak woman,” come trooping through the mind like a legion of devils, and we drop into the box only a small share of all that which the Lord has put into our hands to use for his glory, and away goes the “blessedness” of the minute before. We forget the *date* and *dabitur*, that when one was in good condition, the other also flourished.

There are many Christians who are all the time searching for happiness and peace, who never once think to look in the right direction. If they'd only search for *duty*, if they would work, and *cheerfully* work in the vineyard, the peace would come.

Many lose all anxiety about the race set before them after their faces are once turned heavenward. After the first doubts are removed, they sit down with folded hands. If we have received the germ of a perfect life, isn't the full development required? If the germ is not cultivated, will it not die of neglect, or at best, cease to grow as it ought? Soon after growth ceases, decay begins.

It is easy to see a *pleasant* duty, but it is with



blurred vision that we see what calls for sacrifice of ease, comfort, pleasure, pride, or self. We often do half the duty, the easier part. We do the duties that all the world expects us to do. We attend church service, we call upon certain poor, we attend the "Dorcas," the socials, the festivals, and mite societies. But to give up the easy-chair at home, really to prefer another's comfort and pleasure to our own, to forgive an enemy with all the heart—about these duties we see men as trees walking. The grandest Christian unhesitatingly and with perfect honesty does the duty, the whole duty that is next before him.

I know a woman, fretful, dissatisfied, and restless, who, when she was a girl, was always looking forward to some grand achievement. She thought she had talent, and her life-work was to be something above what the "masses," or the "common herd," could accomplish. She had "aspirations." She had "yearnings" after a great unattainable! I do n't suppose the girl knew whether these yearnings were caused by the head, the heart, or by dyspepsia. She read Emerson, Carlyle, and Kempis, it made very little difference to her which book she read, she understood one as well as she did the other. The "poetry" of the Bible she declared "beautiful."

Her aspirations were always the same—for



nothing tangible, but something great—what some one else had done. She knew there was a summit, and she wanted to be up there. She was created for that place. If she knew that the way up was rugged, rough, and steep, she gave that no thought, for she did not intend to climb as others had climbed, but expected—if she ever thought about the matter at all—that some one would go before her, cast up the highway, and make the path pleasant, and on some charming day in June, a stylish friend would come and drive her up in her new coupé.

She was the daughter of a poor widow who had given her all the wealth of schools, and we know what that means, as far as sacrifice on the mother's part is concerned. The girl always thought of her life-work as being in the far-off future, and when it did come, it would find her in the parlor. Her mother delved in the kitchen. The girl married a poor man; she does not see that it is her duty to help her husband any more than 't was her duty to help her mother. She is still waiting in idleness for her work to come to her, and mourns because she is wasting her fragrance on the desert air. If some great good should fall to her, she would take it as a just reward—for her "aspirations," I suppose. I do n't know what else.

There seems to us to be something ignoble in



taking "pay" for work you have not done; in standing on a summit which was not legitimately reached. We know that the spiritual gift is free; that we are saved by faith, but we know also that faith without works is dead. We know that the life of our great example was full of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

We hear professing Christians talk about the compensation and the reward, wondering where others find so much "sacrifice" in the work. There always has been a class of Christians who, from Pisgah's top, have looked down on the toiling ones beneath, and it looks to us sometimes as though *they* had the bliss and the delight there is in Christian living, while the *workers* in the Church plodded on wearily and hopelessly, hardly daring to look for a reward hereafter, much less thinking of getting it here as they journey heavenward.

Is there a way, to the lovers of ease, whereby they can get into the kingdom by faith alone? Is there a way to glory, by simply "believing?" Some way it seems, if there is, as though that kind of a "glory" is not worth the taking. Are we to be above our Master? Why, the only thing mentioned against Dives was that he had fine clothes, fared sumptuously, and did n't care very much about the poor. He loved self better than he did his neighbor. That was all.



Very few of us will have those chances of self-sacrifice which the world applauds, but do not the little duties that are next before us, if well performed, outweigh the few mighty acts in the life of the world's hero?

It is simply the opportunity and not the person that makes the world's hero. We confess it would be much easier to go to heaven in a few grand flights, than to be continually taking the little steps thitherward. To be a Christian in the little things of life; in witnessing the departure of your best umbrella, or a favorite book in the hands of a smiling, but notoriously careless friend; to smile when you find the button gone from the neck of the shirt when you have only five minutes to catch the train; to keep the lips closed when the husband comes from business tired and worried, and frets at the children, kicks the cat, and grumbles about the supper; to make a dress all with your own tired fingers, put it on hoping the husband will think once more of the time when the slightest change in your toilet called forth a shower of compliments, and find he never notices but it is the same you have worn for the last seven years; to bring home a new dress for the wife and have her accept it with, "For me! O, what horrid taste men have!" to make a set of shirts for the husband, and with almost infinite patience endeavor



to make them perfectly in every respect, and have him say, as he each and every time puts on the whole twelve, until they are worn out, "'Tis so strange a *woman* never can make a decently fitting shirt;" to burn the face and break the back to have fried chicken and apple dumplings for dinner, and hear the placid expression of wonder "why *we* can never have stuffed fowls and plum puddings!" to sit all the evening, after a hard day of toil at the ironing table, or in caring for the children, rocking the cradle and mending socks until ten o'clock, and when the husband comes in from a delightful lecture, meet him with a smiling countenance. Yes, to be a Christian in all such circumstances requires the piety of the old martyrs—nothing modern can be compared with it.

But this is the kind of piety we want if we are ever to reach the summit. It is only a perfect step at a time. It is only to be clean and strong, and real.

I like that word, "real." All my sisters know the comfort there is in having "the real," and do we not also know the comfort there is in *being* "the real?" To know one's own self to feel sure, and also to feel sure and glad, too, that God knows that we are real—that we are genuine to the heart's core—the satisfaction of knowing that we are doing our work all well, "both the seen



and the unseen," is a satisfaction inexpressibly great.

But there are those who are, all their lives, trying to scour their pewter and pass it off for silver. They never do a perfectly independent action, from the selection of their place of worship to the making of the commonest garment. They never ask, "Is this right?" but, "What will they say?" They actually stand in fear of Mrs. Leo and Mrs. Parvenu. "What will they think if I go to the old church on Union Street?" "I wouldn't have her know I turned the dress for the world!" "It will not do to live on Thomas Street, if it is a mile nearer James's office, because Mrs. Leo says 'such *common* people are moving there.'" "It will not do to have Evelina Sophronia take music lessons of Miss Johns, if she is the best teacher in the city, because Mrs. Parvenu's Celestia Cecilia is learning of Signor Ivresse."

It seems as though, if these poor, imitation souls, who never get one particle of real, solid pleasure in this life, go on this way until they reach heaven's gate, they will not then dare go in until they look around, and Mrs. Parvenu or Mrs. Leo says the company is sufficiently select.

There is no thought so comforting to the Christian as this—no one but God can tell me my duty, no one but God can tell you your duty. We must



all seek the wisdom for ourselves. No one can translate your paragraph for you, no one can solve my problems for me. I have no key for your text-book, and you have no key for mine. We must all study our own lesson; you must render your paragraph correctly, and I must reason out my problem. I have never studied from your text-book, and you have never studied from mine. I am no linguist, you are no mathematician. I can give you my rules from Euclid, and you can give me yours from the grammar; but, alas! neither helps the other. In the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual world, our experiences must be unlike. In Church, in society, and in state, I am not to be you, nor you to try and be I. Because you have this, or do not have that, is no reason I should or should not have the same. We must all live our own lives, and each answer at last for his own self. We must work our *own* salvation, and not another's.

We are happiest if we cheerfully work in the space given us to work in; if we all work upon our own embroidery frame. If I use your worsteds I get the wrong colors for the design; if I copy your design my worsteds do not match. God gives out our work to us day by day—design and material. It is in pieces, like the camel's-hair shawls. The little piece we have to do to-day does



not seem to us to be either pretty or desirable, but we will do the work "all well," and when all our pieces are done the Master can put them together—and let us pray that it will be a perfect whole.

Do you think that the work is so given out that it is *impossible* to make a good design with such material—Church-going and dish-washing, Sunday and Monday? Does it seem as though the pattern must be sadly lacking in beauty and symmetry because we rise from our knees, where we have been on the mount, to clean the potatoes for dinner? We come from our closet devotions, and put a patch on the sleeves of Eddie's jacket; we lay down Fletcher or Madame Guyon, and entertain the stupidest of acquaintances. But it puzzles the wisest to know which acts are the most devotional, which most approved of God—which threads, which stitches, made the finest embroidery.

God gives us our work. It is not for us to say what it shall be. Our part is to do the work just as he gives it. To use the thread, to take the stitch, to finish this little piece—never two alike—and then take the next. That is all. It is God's work to put it together.

FINIS.











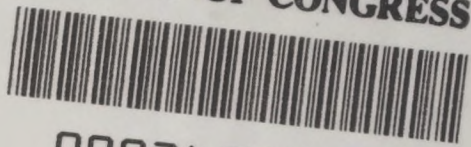








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